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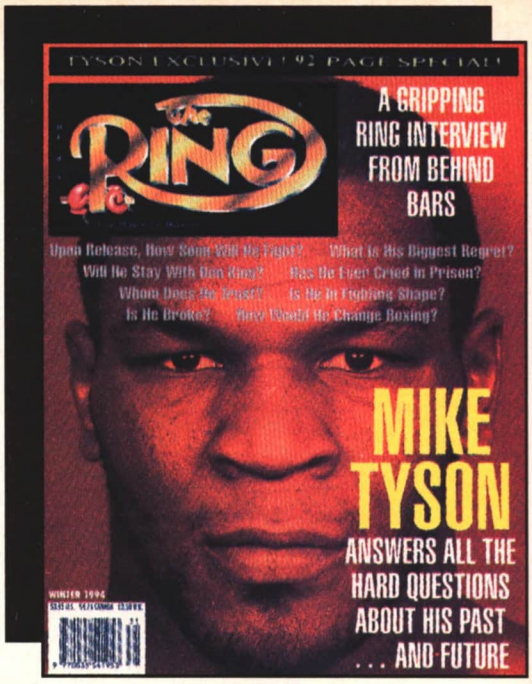

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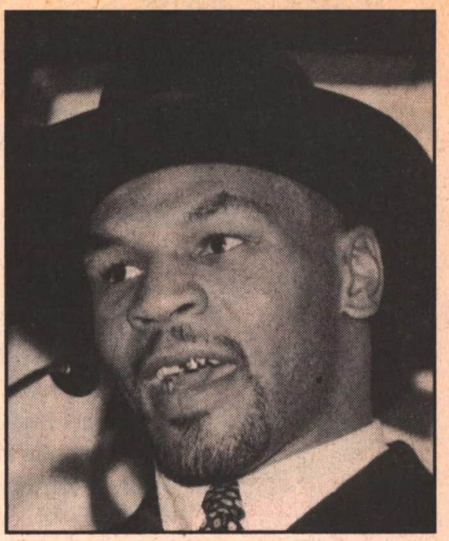

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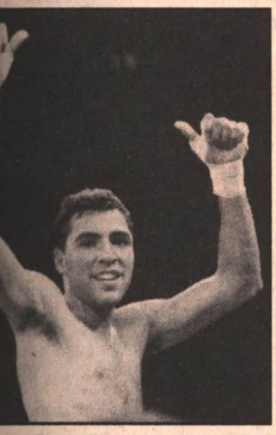

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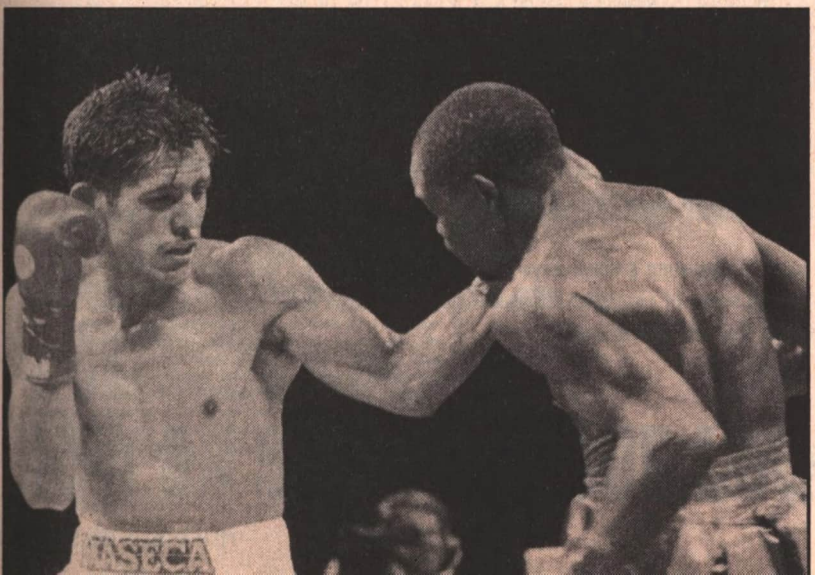

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RINGSIDE

In 1995, Mike Tyson started knocking people out again, and that was good. The year's bad, however, seemed pervasive, especially given the ring tragedies of Gerald McClellan, Jimmy Garcia, and James Murray, and the non-boxing related deaths of Jesse James Hughes, Ginger Tshabalala, Elvis Alvarez, and the legendary Carlos Monzon.

But through it all, Oscar De La Hoya brought light with his Golden Boy smile and might with his Macho Man left hook. I've selected THE RING's Fighter of the Year for the past six seasons, and De La Hoya was the easiest choice yet.

If De La Hoya becomes an all-time great, we'll remember 1995 as the year he matured into a championship-caliber fighter. But even if he fails to advance further, his recent accomplishments will stand on their own. Others won bigger fights (Riddick Bowe kayoed Evander Holyfield), passed tougher tests (Nigel Benn outlasted McClellan), and received better notices (Marco Antonio Barrera was consistently brilliant). Still, the year belonged to De La Hoya, which makes the Killer Bees (Bowe, Benn, and Barrera) my runners-up.

In 1995, De La Hoya convincingly defeated four world champions in John-John Molina, Rafael Ruelas, Genaro Hernandez, and Jesse James Leija. And he got better with every fight. In fact, by the year's end, he was an entry in almost everyone's pound-for-pound top 10.

After his victory over Leija, De La Hoya spoke of fighting Julio Cesar Chavez and then retiring. The pressure of living up to his image, he said, was getting to him. Funny, but the pressure of living up to his potential doesn't seem to be bothering him at all.

***

Fight of the Year: Unlike Fighter of the Year, a close race. I'll go with Saman Sorjaturong's desperation seventh-round kayo of defending WBC-IBF junior flyweight champion Chiquita Gonzalez. The brawl met all criteria: It included non-stop action, knockdowns, changes in momentum, and a dramatic ending. Runners-up: Nigel Benn KO 10 Gerald McClellan; Vincent Pettway KO 6 Simon Brown.

Knockout of the Year: The best was saved for last. Julio Cesar Vasquez' 11th-round one-punch kayo of defending WBA junior middleweight champion Carl Daniels in December came without warning; Daniels was en route to a comfortable points victory. Runners-up: Julian Jackson KO 2 Agostino Cardamone; Pettway KO 6 Brown; Riddick Bowe KO 8 Evander Holyfield; Danny Romero KO 6 Miguel Martinez.

Upset of the Year: Mike Tyson W Disq. 1 Peter McNeeley. Just kidding. The choice is Willy Salazar KO 7 Danny Romero. Think about it: Unbeaten IBF flyweight champion Romero, who also happens to be a superstar-in-the-making, gets stopped by a fighter with a record of 41-21-1. Fortunately for Romero, it was a non-title bout. Runners-up: Sorjaturong KO 7 Gonzalez; Montell Griffin W 12 James Toney; Andrew Council KO 9 Buddy McGirt.

Round of the Year: The seventh and last round of Sorjaturong's upset kayo of Gonzalez was similar to, and almost as dramatic as, round seven of Gonzalez-Michael Carbajal I. Runners-up: Pettway-Brown round 5; Alejandro Gonzalez-Kevin Kelley round 8; Mark Johnson-Leon Salazar round 3.

Let's hope 1996 is boxing's best year yet.

Steve Farhood
Editor-in-Chief

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COME OUT WRITING

We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

TYSON, PRO AND CON

There can be no more doubt: Mike Tyson is going to regain the undisputed heavyweight title. All the critics who blasted "Iron Mike" for his laughable blowout of Peter McNeeley wiped egg off their faces after Tyson whacked out a respectable (and unbeaten) contender in Buster Mathis Jr.

Tyson will cruise past Frank Bruno, who has developed a big mouth, Bruce Seldon, and pretender Frans Botha. After doing that, he'll be as sharp as ever. Which means I feel sorry for Riddick Bowe, Lennox Lewis, and anybody else who finds himself in Tyson's path.

BILL McBRIDE
Port Arthur, TX

Mike Tyson looked like an amateur in his kayo of Buster Mathis Jr. He threw punches from left field, missed badly, and initiated most of the holding during the all-too-frequent clinches. Tyson's lost his timing. That fact was masked by the McNeeley debacle, but anybody could see it now.

Any heavyweight will be able to make Tyson miss. But most of the top big men hit a lot harder than Mathis, who can't break an egg with a hammer. What will happen when Tyson gets hit by a sharp counterpuncher? A lot of people are going to be very disappointed. But they shouldn't be surprised.

KEN BARSTELLA
Mount Vernon, NY

Photo by Bill Apter

Did Mike Tyson look good or bad in his December kayo of Buster Mathis Jr.? Ask a thousand people and you'll get a thousand different answers.

THE HIT MAN WILL GET HIT

Thomas Hearns' recent criticism of Roy Jones was hysterical. Does Hearns seriously believe he would stand a chance against Jones at cruiserweight? There are few, if any, fighters under the heavyweight division who can give Jones a serious test. Jones would kayo "The Hit Man" in two rounds.

Even at middleweight, Hearns wouldn't have stood a chance against Jones. Marvin Hagler took Hearns out in three, and Jones would do the same—at middleweight or any other weight. I take nothing away from Hearns, who is one of the best to ever step into the ring. But Jones is *the* best, and he'll continue to prove it by dispatching his opponents with ease. That goes for Hearns, Nigel Benn, and anyone else.

JIM McGRADY
Mastic Beach, NY

POUND-FOR-POUND

I am writing to complain about your pound-for-pound ratings, specifically the fact that Riddick Bowe is listed, and more specifically, that Bowe is listed ahead of Marco Antonio Barrera.

Nostalgia being what it is, I can understand your desire to include a heavyweight in the pound-for-pound top 10. But your sentiment is misplaced. If Bowe weighed the same as Barrera and they met in the ring, he would get pulverized.

Julio Cesar Chavez is 10 times a better fighter than Bowe, and I don't see him in your pound-for-pound ratings. This is probably justified. But if you're going to rate fighters based on nostalgia, list Chavez and not Bowe.

One other point: In the October 1995 issue, you listed the 10 fights you'd most like to see. One matchup featured Barrera vs. Naseem Hamed. You picked Hamed to win by decision, so why isn't he ranked ahead of Barrera?

JEREMY WEST
Bromley, England

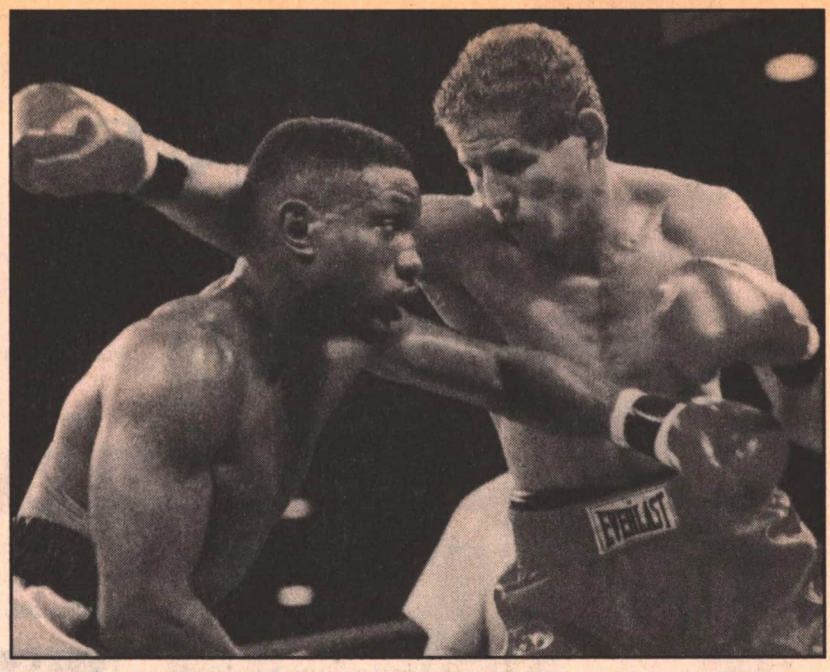


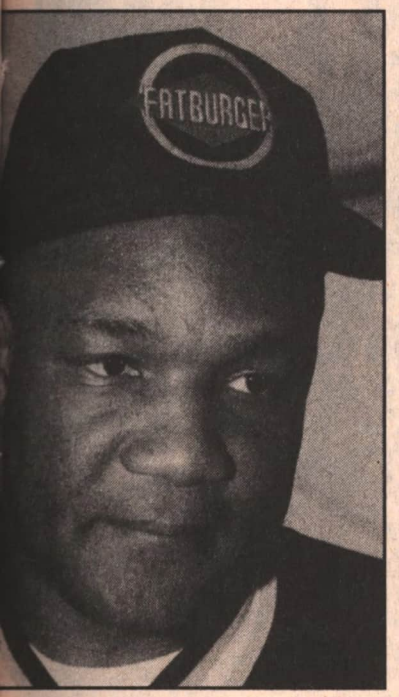
Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

At this point, the greatest challenge facing welterweight titlist Pernell Whitaker, shown facing Jake Rodriguez in November, is co-champion Felix Trinidad.

A TOTAL MOCKERY

An open letter to George Foreman:

The word is that you're going to fight Michael Moorer again. If you find the guts to fight Riddick Bowe, I sincerely hope he knocks you back into reality so you'll shut your obnoxious mouth. You are nothing but an overweight braggart who has landed one lucky punch (vs. an uninterested Moorer) and escaped with a few horrendous decisions (vs. Axel Schulz and Alex Stewart). And let's not forget the beatings you took at the hands of Evander Holyfield, who knocked you around the ring like an overstuffed punching bag, and Tommy Morrison. You stated that Holyfield couldn't crack an egg, yet he's knocked down two heavyweights with great chins (Bowe and Ray Mercer), and knocked out Buster Douglas, Michael Dokes, and Stewart, to name a few.



Is George Foreman's act getting stale? Reader Marc Vivian says Foreman should've retired a long time ago.

While you run like a baby from any challenge that isn't a huge payday and continue to hide from the Schulzes, Tony Tuckers, and Frans Bothas of the world, true champions like Bowe, Holyfield, and Lennox Lewis strive to fight only the best. Bowe and Lewis have defeated numerous top contenders in the last two years (Larry Donald, Herbie Hide, Jorge Luis Gonzalez, Lionel Butler, Morrison), while you've sat on your immense butt and complained about everyone running from you.

The truth is, you wouldn't have beaten Bowe or Lewis in 1974, and you can't beat them now. Even Bruce Seldon or Frank Bruno would dismantle you from your senses, and I don't even want to talk about what Mike Tyson would do to you.

So, Big George, quit talking crap and retire. You'll stop making a fool of yourself, and maybe your past accomplishments will overshadow the mockery that you've become.

MARC VIVIAN
New York, NY

WHITAKER-TRINIDAD

It seems some people, like HBO's Larry Merchant, are trying to prepare fans for Pernell Whitaker's loss to Felix Trinidad by saying "Sweet Pea" is getting older and thus implying he's no longer at his best. Hey, real boxing fans, don't let these people rob Trinidad of his well-deserved status. When they try to feed you that nonsense, remember that these are the same people who continue to rate Whitaker number one in the pound-for-pound ratings. They can't have it both ways.

DAISY RIVERA
Livingston Manor, NY

Not only is Felix Trinidad the best welterweight in the world, but he's in the same class as Roy Jones. I don't see Pernell Whitaker going the distance against the biggest, baddest welterweight since Sugar Ray Robinson. Pound-for-pound? If Whitaker fights Trinidad, all he's going to get is pounded.

CARLOS J. TORRES
White Plains, NY ■

ROUND ONE

GEORGE BOORMAN

The ad in *The New York Times* said George Foreman would be signing autographs at Bloomingdale's department store as part of a personal appearance promoting his new low-fat cooking appliance. As a boxing historian and avid collector of memorabilia, I decided it would be worth my time to travel into Manhattan and get Big George's signature. I took along two prized boxing gloves on which, over the years, I have collected the names of many famous champions.

My only other encounter with Foreman had occurred some 25 years before. I remember his indifference to the enthusiasm of a young fan who was meeting him for the first time. Let's face it: The *old* George Foreman was an unpleasant boor. But hey, this was the *new* George I was going to see, the lovable, mature chap with the self-deprecating humor.

Well, as Yogi Berra once said, "It was *deja vu* all over again." When I respectfully submitted one of the gloves for his signature, George stared at it, frowned, shook his head, and said emphatically, "I won't sign that!" He leaned back in his chair, looking as though I had presented him with a plate of worms. Only after I had pointed out Joe Frazier's signature did Foreman agree to pick up a pen. Then he reluctantly scrawled something illegible on the glove.

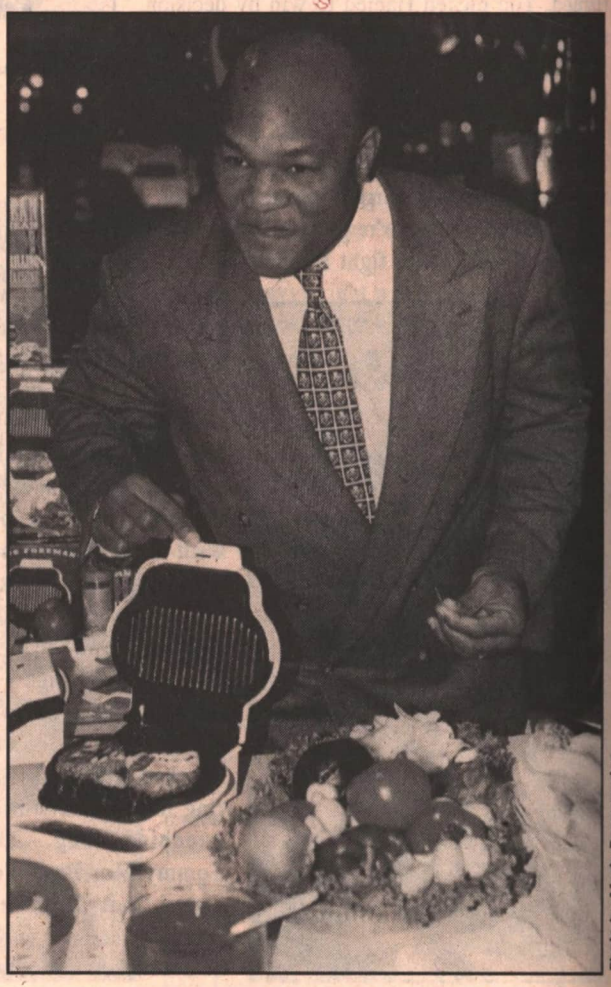


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Big George: Wining and dining—but not signing

As I began to leave, Foreman said, "But you can have this," and without expression handed me a signed photo that showed him dressed as a chef, standing in a kitchen and holding his low-fat cooking appliance. So that was it—George was there only to hand out his signature on this photo. But nowhere in the ad had it said Foreman would be signing *only* a promotional photo of himself.

Why the attitude? For a brief moment, the carefully crafted public persona, that of a huge, friendly teddy bear of a man, failed to surface. Obviously, the act still needs some polishing.

–Mike Silver

HAS-BEAN?

Rocky Marciano needn't worry: Butterbean is *not* going to win 49 consecutive four-rounders.

In one of the greatest upsets in history (okay, maybe that's a *slight* overstatement), the Bean, 15-1 (9), was stopped in the second round by New York's Mitchell Rose on the De La Hoya-Leija undercard at Madison Square Garden.

"I'm not taking credit," said Top Rank matchmaker Ron Katz, "because he wasn't supposed to lose to *Mitchell Rose*."

That was because Rose entered the ring with a record of 1-6-1 (1).

In the first round, Rose bloodied Butterbean's nose and buckled his chubby knees with several right hands. This shocked not only Butterbean, but also ringsiders, who figured that, given his record, Rose wouldn't know how to walk to ring-center for the final instructions, much less make a pair of fists and move his hands. In the second, the assault continued until Butterbean, backed to the ropes and shamelessly swallowing every punch thrown his way, was rescued by referee Joe Santarpia.

"No doubt I could have gotten through the round," said Butterbean, once and always a Toughman. "I hurt him."

"Butterbean had a bad night," said Katz. "All the appearances, all the traveling may have caught up to him." All the lack of talent, too.

Butterbean's punishment for losing? A return to the Garden in a four-rounder on February 29's George Foreman-Michael Moorer card. His opponent? Another once-beaten heavyweight by the name of Mark Gastineau.

–Steve Farhood

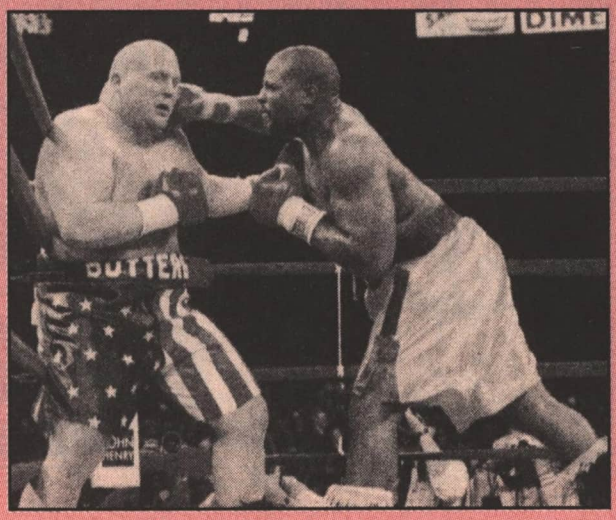
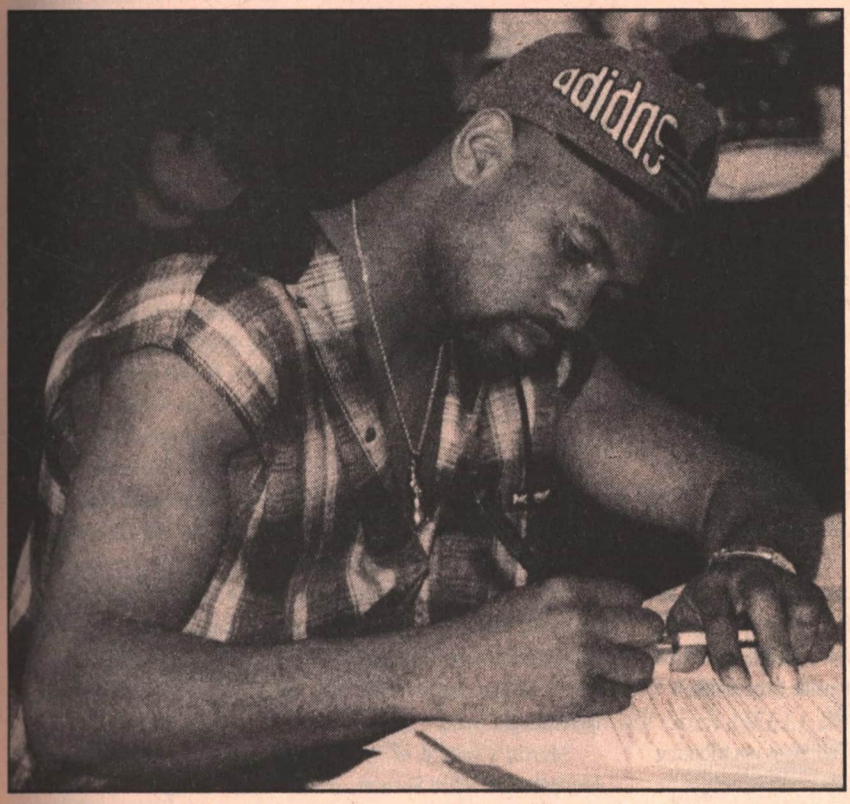


Photo by John Pomponio

Rose found Butterbean a large target

THE HOOP-LA SURROUNDING ROY JONES



Will Jones soon be signing a contract to play hoops?

If Roy Jones is getting bored with boxing, boxing better do something about it. According to Jones, the only thing that would excite him is a unification showdown with WBC champion Nigel Benn.

"Nigel Benn is the only guy out there for me, and he doesn't want to fight," said the unbeaten IBF super middleweight champion. "It's a straight-up deal: Fight me or I'll move on."

Jones says he'll move from the boxing ring to the basketball court. In December, he scored 26 points and led his team to a 116-111 victory over a squad captained by fellow roundball junkie Pernell Whitaker in a charity event in Pensacola, Florida. And as we went to press, he had accepted an invitation to try out with the London Towers of the Basketball League of England.

Jones, who stands 5'11", shoots hoops just about every day. "I want to be the first boxer to play in the NBA," he says.

Here's to hoping Jones gets to fight Benn, who figures to be a whole lot easier one on one than Penny Hardaway.

–Steve Farhood

THE 10 HEAVYWEIGHTS FRANS BOTHA CAN *DEFINITELY* BEAT

Photo by Mike Cooper/Allsport

There are plenty of guys Botha can beat

10. Mark Gastineau, but only because he's been inactive.

9. Norm from *Cheers*, but only because he's useless after three beers.

8. Newt Gingrich, but only because he refuses to move to his left.

7. Riddick Bowe, but only because he can't punch when he's doubled over laughing.

6. Axel Schulz, but only because the judges didn't give him the decision in Germany, so they're certainly not going to give it to him anywhere else.

5. Eric Esch, but only because Butterbean's forgotten his roots.

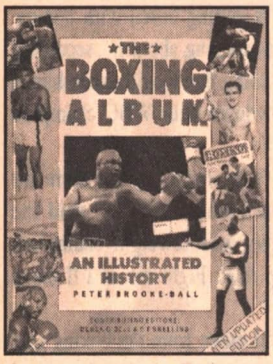
4. Ron Lyle and Earnie Shavers, but only because ... well, maybe not.

3. Jay Leno, but only because *anybody* could reach that lantern jaw.

2. Jack Dempsey, but only because he's been dead for 13 years.

1. Peter McNeeley, but only because he's learned he can make more money losing than winning.

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



Don't waste your money on *The Boxing Album: An Illustrated History*, by Peter Brooke-Ball (256 pages, Smithmark Publishers, $19.98). The oversized book will fit nicely on your coffee table, but won't add much to it. Filled with 500 color and black-and-white photos, it is advertised as "the ultimate companion for the serious fight fan." Instead, it is the ultimate disappointment.

The Boxing Album includes three chapters: The Champions, The Great Fights, and The World Of Boxing. There's a heavy British slant to the book, and Brooke-Ball's credibility evaporates when he includes Freddie Mills and Frank Bruno as "Great Champions Of The Gloves Era." The author's editorial judgment must be further questioned given his inclusion of Lloyd Honeyghan-Jorge Vaca II in the chapter on great fights. That bout was as competitive as a street mugging.

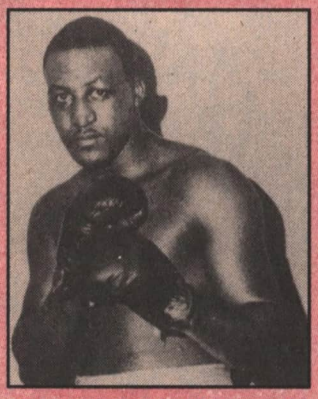
Worse yet, an entire paragraph on Roberto Duran is repeated on pages 90 and 91, and part of the text runs thusly: "Duran's decision to quit against Leonard did little for the WBC junior middleweight crown. Hearns proved to be the much stronger man and Duran was knocked out inside two rounds."

Huh?

The Boxing Album lists Derek O'Dell and O.F. Snelling as contributing editors. Seems like all they contributed to was the chaos.

–Steve Farhood

LEOTIS MARTIN, 1940-1995



Martin: The bad-luck heavyweight

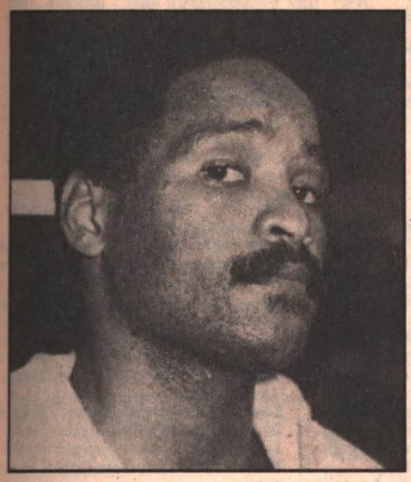
Leotis Martin's streak of bad luck claimed him when he died on November 20, 1995, en route to a hospital from his home in the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia. The 55-year-old former heavyweight contender, who turned pro in 1962, had suffered a stroke brought on by hypertension and complications from diabetes. Martin had retired from Budd & Co. earlier in '95 after 31 years as a machinist.

Martin was world class, but his career was ill-fated: Sonny Banks died from head injuries after Martin knocked him out in 1965; a big local showdown between Martin and heavyweight champion Joe Frazier never materialized because of a personal feud between the contender's manager, Pinny Schafer, and Frazier's manager, Yank Durham. A ninth-round knockout of former world champion Sonny Liston in 1969 was supposed to turn Martin's career around, but he suffered a detached retina in the bout and never fought again.

Martin's record of 31-5 (19) included victories over Karl Mildenberger, Thad Spencer, and Al "Blue" Lewis.

–Nigel Collins

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Benitez: Once the king of style

Former world champion **Hector Camacho** was charged with aggravated assault after allegedly pushing his 2½-month pregnant girlfriend, **Amy Torres**, during a domestic dispute in Orlando, Florida. Camacho was released from jail after Torres said she caused the fight and wanted charges dropped ... In Fayetteville, North Carolina, heavyweight contender **Ray Mercer** was charged with assault after allegedly hitting his girlfriend in the head. According to state law, Mercer was required to spend 48 hours in jail ... On a November 3 boxing show in New Orleans, veteran referee **Martin Coscino**, 62, suffered a massive heart attack. He died eight days later. "Besides being an excellent official," said **Leonard Miller,** chairman of the Louisiana State Boxing Commission, "Martin was just a wonderful guy" ... According to published reports, triple-crown champion **Wilfred Benitez**, 37, is broke and suffering from a boxing-inflicted brain disease.

THE PUNCHLINES

If he's my brother, I've got to talk to my mother."

–Buster Mathis Jr. on Mike Tyson calling him "brother" during their postfight embrace

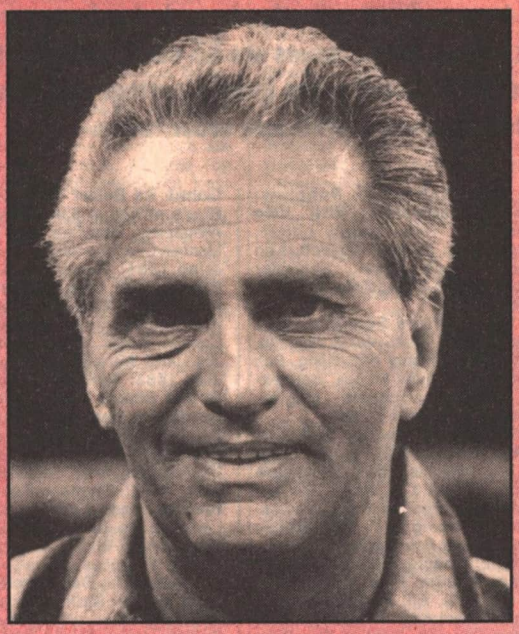
"Why can't Mike Tyson be the fighter he once was? Because I'm not with him."

–Kevin Rooney, Tyson's former trainer

JOEY FARIELLO, 1937-1995

On December 27, three days after suffering a major stroke, Joey Fariello, one of the most respected trainers in boxing, died in New York City. He was 58.

A disciple of Cus D'Amato, Fariello trained such world champions as Mark Breland, Junior Jones, and Tom Johnson, and, 25 years apart, worked with both Buster Mathis Jr. and Sr. Fariello was in the former's corner on December 16, when Mathis was kayoed by Mike Tyson. One week earlier, he had traveled to Stuttgart, Germany, for IBF featherweight champion Johnson's defense against Jose Badillo.

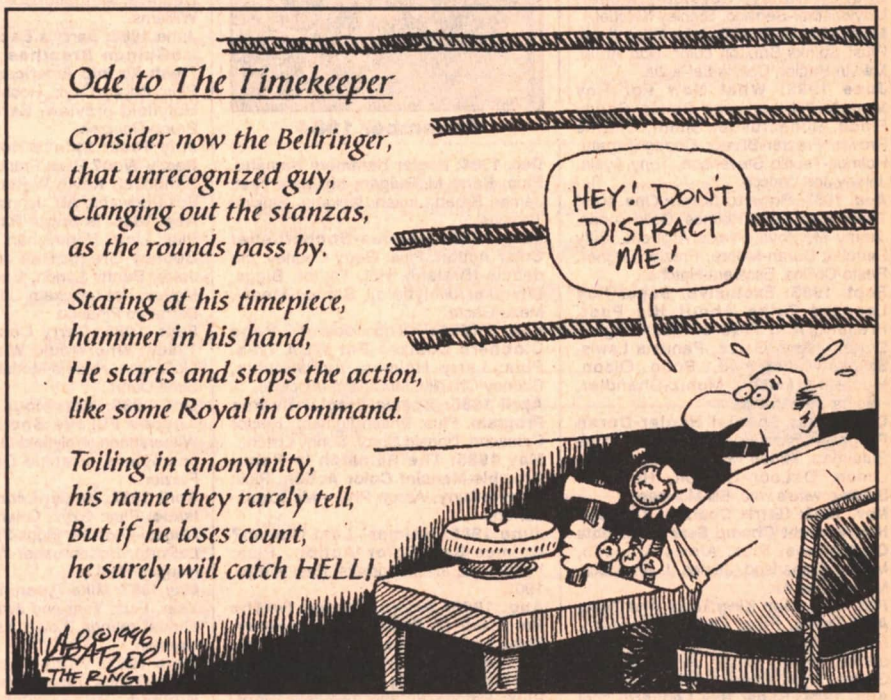


Fariello: A trainer of champions

"Joey was a kind, unassuming man," said Johnson. "When he first met me, he didn't think much of me; he said I was ordinary. But he came to appreciate my skills, and he always helped me make adjustments. Whenever I fight from now on, there'll always be a little bit of him with me."

–Steve Farhood

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



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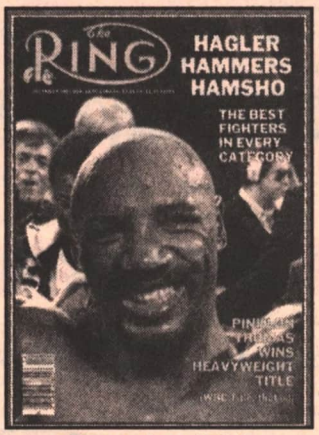

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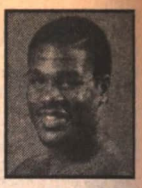
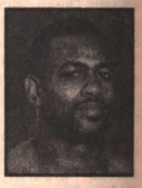
THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended January 10, 1996

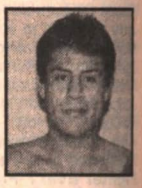


Riddick Bowe
Heavyweight

Al Cole
Cruiserweight



Roy Jones
Super Middleweight



Miguel Angel Gonzalez
Lightweight

Azumah Nelson
Junior Lightweight

Yuri Arbachakov
Flyweight

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **RIDDICK BOWE** — Fort Washington, MD *38-1*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** — England *28-1*
3. **MIKE TYSON** — Southington, OH *43-1*
4. **MICHAEL MOORER** — Detroit, MI *36-1*
5. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** — Atlanta, GA *32-3*
6. **BRUCE SELDON** — Atlantic City, NJ *33-3 (WBA Champ)*
7. **FRANK BRUNO** — England *41-4 (WBC Champ)*
8. **GEORGE FOREMAN** — Houston, TX *74-4*
9. **ALEXANDR ZOLKIN** — Westerville, OH *24-2*
10. **HENRY AKINWANDE** — England *27-0-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **AL COLE** — Spring Valley, NY *27-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **NATE MILLER** — Philadelphia, PA *25-4 (WBA Champ)*
3. **ADOLPHO WASHINGTON** — Lexington, KY *24-3-2*
4. **ANACLET WAMBA** — France *45-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ** — Argentina *19-1-1 (WBC Interim Champ)*
6. **SERGEI KOBOZEV** — Brooklyn, NY *22-1*
7. **JAMES TONEY** — Ann Arbor, MI *49-2-2*
8. **TORSTEN MAY** — Germany *11-0*
9. **THOMAS HEARNS** — Detroit, MI *55-4-1*
10. **KENNY KEENE** — Emmett, ID *32-1*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **HENRY MASKE** — Germany *27-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **VIRGIL HILL** — Bismarck, ND *41-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **FABRICE TIOZZO** — France *32-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** — Chicago, IL *19-0*
5. **MERQUI SOSA** — New York, NY *26-4-2*
6. **MIKE McCALLUM** — Brooklyn, NY *48-3-1*
7. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** — Germany *29-0*
8. **FRANK TATE** — Houston, TX *35-4*
9. **WILLIAM GUTHRIE** — Philadelphia, PA *18-0*
10. **LOUIS DEL VALLE** — Bronx, NY *22-0*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** — Pensacola, FL *30-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **NIGEL BENN** — England *42-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **STEVE COLLINS** — Ireland *31-3*
4. **FRANK LILES** — N. Hollywood, CA *28-1 (WBA Champ)*
5. **TIM LITTLES** — Flint, MI *26-1*
6. **VINNY PAZIENZA** — Cranston, RI *40-6*
7. **BRYANT BRANNON** — Trenton, NJ *16-0*
8. **HENRY WHARTON** — England *22-2-1*
9. **MICHAEL NUNN** — Davenport, IA *48-3*
10. **RAY CLOSE** — N. Ireland *21-3-1*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **QUINCY TAYLOR** — Dallas, TX *26-3 (WBC Champ)*
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS** — Philadelphia, PA *27-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **SHINJI TAKEHARA** — Japan *24-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **JORGE CASTRO** — Argentina *98-5-2*
5. **JOHN DAVID JACKSON** — Seattle, WA *34-1*
6. **REGGIE JOHNSON** — Houston, TX *35-5-1*
7. **JOE LIPSEY** — Lansing, MI *25-0*
8. **DANA ROSENBLATT** — Malden, MA *26-0*
9. **LONNIE BRADLEY** — New York, NY *22-0*
10. **JULIAN JACKSON** — Virgin Islands *51-4*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **TERRY NORRIS**
   Mission Valley, CA *41-6 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ**
   Argentina *56-2 (WBA Champ)*
3. **BRONCO McKART**
   Monroe, MI *27-1*
4. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO *34-2*
5. **VINCENT PETTWAY**
   Baltimore, MD *38-5-1*
6. **YORI BOY CAMPAS**
   Mexico *63-1*
7. **ANDREW COUNCIL**
   Lanham, MD *24-3-3*
8. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI**
   France *29-2*
9. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   St. Petersburg, FL *32-1*
10. **KEITH HOLMES**
    Washington, D.C. *27-1*

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA *37-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico *27-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana *30-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI *37-1*
5. **CRISANTO ESPANA**
   N. Ireland *31-1*
6. **DERRELL COLEY**
   Capitol Heights, MD *28-1-2*
7. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico *22-0-1*
8. **VINCE PHILLIPS**
   Las Vegas, NV *33-1*
9. **EAMONN LOUGHRAN**
   Ireland *26-1-1*
10. **HECTOR CAMACHO**
    Orlando, FL *57-3*

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia *15-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **FRANKIE RANDALL**
   Warren, OH *52-3-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ**
   Mexico *95-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **FRED PENDLETON**
   Miami, FL *39-20-4*
5. **JUAN COGGI**
   Argentina *69-3-2*
6. **SAMMY FUENTES**
   Hermosa Beach, CA *33-13-1*
8. **CHARLES MURRAY**
   Rochester, NY *35-3*
7. **JAKE RODRIGUEZ**
   Brentwood, NY *28-4-2*
9. **JAN BERGMAN**
   South Africa *29-0*
10. **KHALID RAHILOU**
    France *25-2*

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA *20-0*
2. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *39-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **ORZUBEK NAZAROV**
   Japan *22-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO *17-0*
5. **GEORGE SCOTT**
   Pembroke Pines, FL *27-1*
6. **PHILIP HOLIDAY**
   South Africa *26-0 (IBF Champ)*
7. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA *18-0*
8. **LEAVANDER JOHNSON**
   Atlantic City, NJ *23-1-1*
9. **LAMAR MURPHY**
   Miami, FL *18-1*
10. **JOHN-JOHN MOLINA**
    Puerto Rico *38-4*

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **AZUMAH NELSON**
   Ghana *38-3-2 (WBC Champ)*
2. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ *22-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **GENARO HERNANDEZ**
   Los Angeles, CA *32-1-1*
4. **TRACY PATTERSON**
   Highland, NY *54-4-1*
5. **GABE RUELAS**
   Arleta, CA *41-3*
6. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX *30-2-2*
7. **REGGIE TUUR**
   Whitestone, NY *40-3-1*
8. **ROBERT GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA *22-0*
9. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea *18-0-3 (WBA Champ)*
10. **JEFF FENECH**
    Australia *27-2-1*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **TOM JOHNSON**
   Detroit, MI *41-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **LUISITO ESPINOSA**
   Japan *37-7 (WBC Champ)*
3. **MANUEL MEDINA**
   Mexico *51-7*
4. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *37-3*
5. **NASEEM HAMED**
   England *20-0*
6. **ELOY ROJAS**
   Venezuela *32-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
7. **EVER BELENO**
   Colombia *30-1*
8. **MIGUEL ARROZAL**
   Portland, OR *25-5*
9. **DERRICK GAINER**
   Pensacola, FL *14-3*
10. **STEVE ROBINSON**
    Wales *21-10-1*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico *39-0*
2. **VUYANI BUNGU**
   South Africa *28-2 (IBF Champ)*
3. **KENNEDY McKINNEY**
   Memphis, TN *28-1-1*
4. **ANTONIO CERMENO**
   Venezuela *23-1 (WBA Champ)*
5. **DANIEL ZARAGOZA**
   Mexico *51-7-3 (WBC Champ)*
6. **ORLANDO CANIZALES**
   Laredo, TX *42-2-1*
7. **WELCOME NCITA**
   South Africa *36-2*
8. **HECTOR ACERO-SANCHEZ**
   New York, NY *32-3-3*
9. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico *19-0*
10. **JUNIOR JONES**
    Brooklyn, NY *37-2*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
   Las Vegas, NV *18-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **MBULELO BOTILE**
   South Africa *18-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **NANA KONADU**
   Ghana *35-2*
4. **ANCEE GEDEON**
   Westminster, CA *14-7-1*
5. **VEERAPHOL SAHAPROM**
   Thailand *4-0 (WBA Champ)*
6. **ELIECER JULIO**
   Colombia *29-1*
7. **JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI**
   Japan *12-2-1*
8. **DAORUNG MP PETROLEUM**
   Thailand *55-5-1*
9. **PAULIE AYALA**
   Ft. Worth, TX *17-0*
10. **JOHNNY ARMOUR**
    England *20-0*

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **HIROSHI KAWASHIMA**
   Japan *18-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Albuquerque, NM *32-0-2*
3. **CARLOS SALAZAR**
   Argentina *38-6-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **ALIMI GOITIA**
   Venezuela *13-0 (WBA Champ)*
5. **HAROLD GREY**
   Colombia *20-0*
6. **HYUNG CHUL LEE**
   South Korea *19-5*
7. **DAVID GRIMAN**
   Venezuela *21-2*
8. **RICARDO VARGAS**
   Mexico *20-4-3*
9. **ARTHUR JOHNSON**
   Cahokia, IL *11-3*
10. **GERRY PENALOSA**
    Philippines *30-1-1*

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **YURI ARBACHAKOV**
   Japan *21-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. *28-1*
3. **SAEN SOW PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand *23-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **DANNY ROMERO**
   Albuquerque, NM *25-1 (IBF Champ)*
5. **ALBERTO JIMENEZ**
   Mexico *30-3-2*
6. **ISAIAS ZAMUDIO**
   Blythe, CA *40-5-1*
7. **ENRIQUE OROZCO**
   Mexico *30-4-1*
8. **CHATCHAI ELITE-GYM**
   Thailand *20-1*
9. **CHOKCHAI 3-K BATTERY**
   Thailand *29-1*
10. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
    Mexico *31-2*

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand *27-2-1 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **CHIQUITA GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *41-3*
3. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL**
   Phoenix, AZ *38-2*
4. **HI YONG CHOI**
   South Korea *19-1 (WBA Champ)*
5. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico *45-4-4*
6. **CARLOS MURILLO**
   Panama *29-2*
7. **LEO GAMEZ**
   Venezuela *29-4-1*
8. **ERIC GRIFFIN**
   Jasper, TN *15-2*
9. **MANUEL JESUS HERRERA**
   Dominican Republic *16-4-1*
10. **SHIRO YAHIRO**
    Japan *21-2-1*

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Welterweight
2. **ROY JONES**
   Super Middleweight
3. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Strawweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Lightweight
5. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Welterweight
6. **YURI ARBACHAKOV**
   Flyweight
7. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
8. **RIDDICK BOWE**
   Heavyweight
9. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Junior Featherweight
10. **TERRY NORRIS**
    Junior Middleweight

NEW FACES

JOE CALZAGHE

Super Middleweight

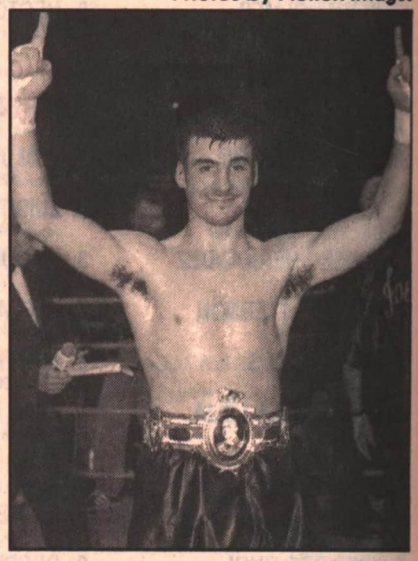
By Gareth Jones

The midwives at London's Hammersmith Hospital are becoming keen followers of the fight game these days. One of the babies they delivered there, a certain Franklin Bruno, is now WBC heavyweight champion. Another, Joseph William Calzaghe, has already claimed a British title and is widely tipped to follow Big Frank on to the world stage.

Don't let either the birthplace or the surname fool you. Calzaghe is a Welshman, brought up since he was two in the former mining village of Newbridge in the valleys of Gwent, and carries the hopes of a nation as he bids to become Wales' sixth world champion.

Joint managers Mickey Duff and Terry Lawless, who between them represent much of recent British boxing history, believe the 23-year-old southpaw will make it. And Calzaghe's 14 consecutive wins in barely two years as a professional offer weighty support to their claims.

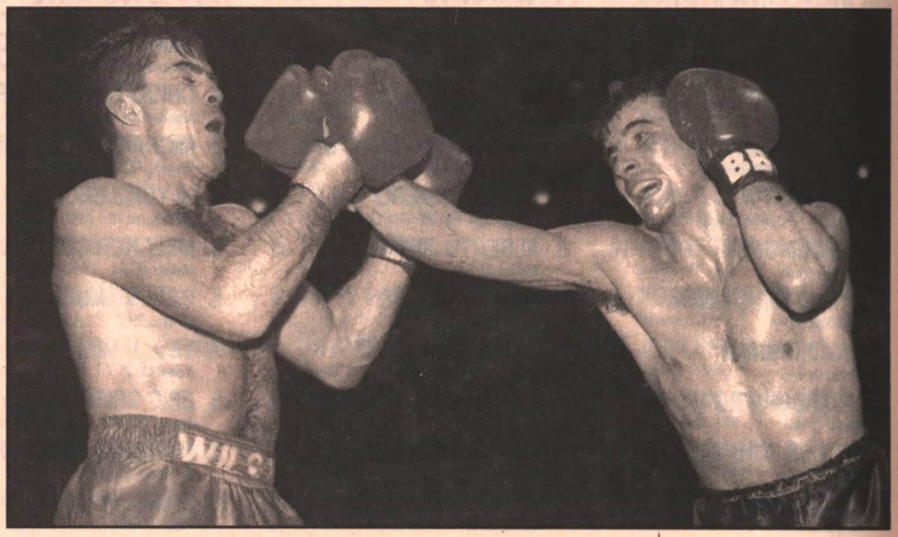
Photos by Action Images



"He's the most talented youngster I've ever had," insisted Duff. "I'm sure he can win a world title."

The super-confident Calzaghe is in no mood to disagree.

(Continued on page 58)



Calzaghe powers past Stephen Wilson

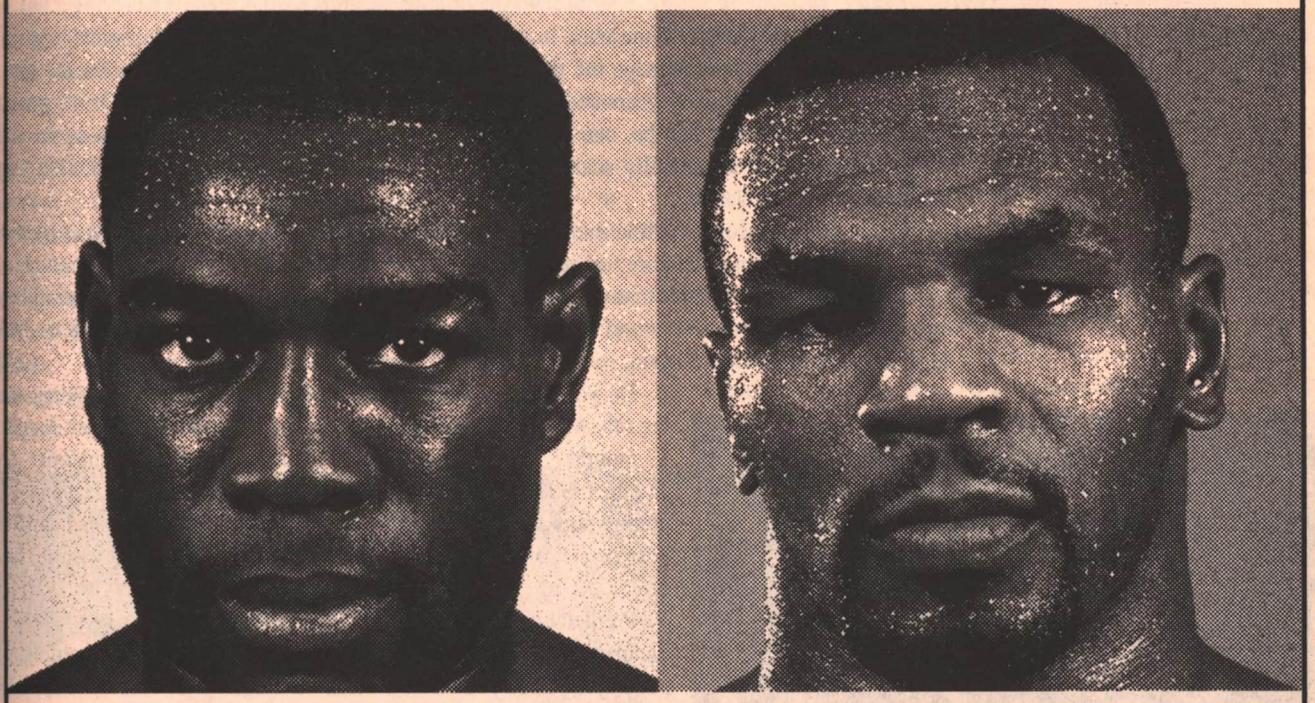
PRO RECORD

1993		
Oct. 1	Paul Hanlon, Cardiff, Wales	KO 1
Nov. 10	Paul Mason, Watford, England	KO 1
Dec. 16	Spencer Alton, Newport, Wales	KO 2
1994		
Jan. 22	Martin Rosamond, Cardiff	KO 1
March 1	Darren Littlewood, Dudley, England	KO 1
June 4	Karl Barwise, Cardiff	KO 1
Oct. 1	Mark Dawson, Cardiff	KO 1
Nov. 30	Trevor Ambrose, Wolverhampton, England	KO 2
1995		
Feb. 14	Frankie Minton, London	KO 1
Feb. 22	Bobbi Joe Edwards, Telford, England	W 8
May 19	Robert Curry, London	KO 1
July 8	Tyrone Jackson, York, England	KO 4
Sept. 30	Nick Manners, Basildon, England	KO 4
Oct. 28	Stephen Wilson, London	KO 8

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KO
14	14	0	0	13

LIVE ON PAY PER VIEW

BRUNO



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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

A *FULL* NELSON

Maybe Azumah Nelson came back to the throne as a favor to us. Perhaps he wants to give us one more chance to acknowledge the truly remarkable warrior he is, and to atone for the sins of overlooking him in the early years and giving up on him too soon in the late ones. Or it's possible he was simply offended that he, one of the gems of his generation, was expected to serve as the comeback patsy an emotionally scarred Gabe Ruelas needed on the road back from his tragic knockout of Jimmy Garcia.

Whatever the reason, the little man with the funny-sounding name decided he had at least one more big night in him, one more moment to bask in the glory even if, in his case, the spotlight has never been any more intense than a penlight. Did it matter that Nelson was less than scintillating throughout much of his five-round stoppage of Ruelas? Hardly. Nelson went home with the WBC super featherweight crown again, so it still looks like a line drive in the box score.

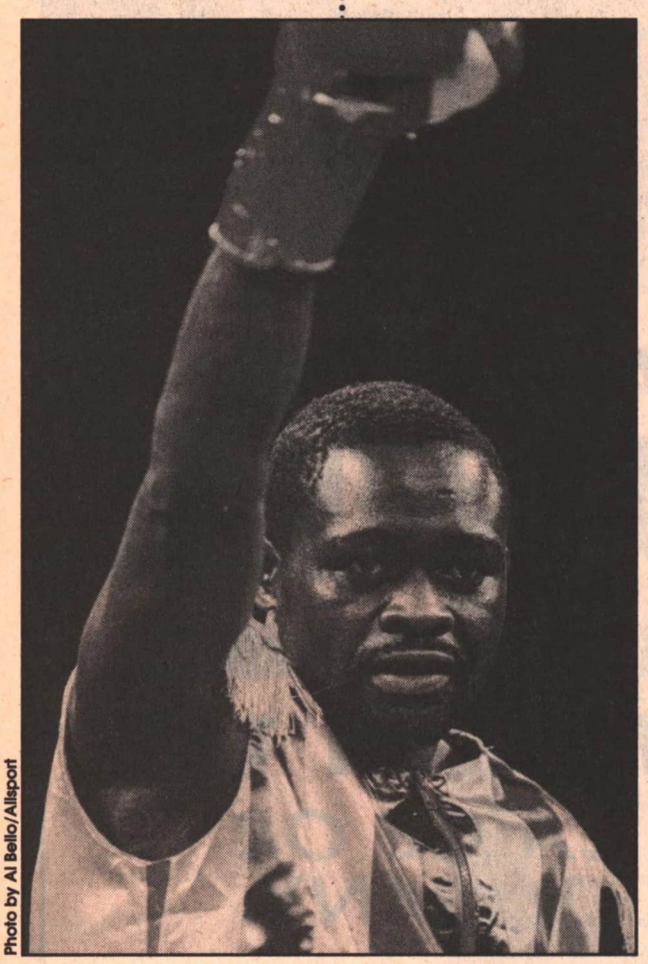


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

It's not likely Azumah Nelson will get the credit he deserves following his fifth-round kayo of Gabe Ruelas in December. "The Professor" seems destined to fight in the shadows of others.

Do you know what the most amazing aspect of Nelson's regaining the title was? The fact that he is 37 years old? That he hadn't fought in 19 months? That he was facing a man he beat only by majority decision in 1993? No, the most amazing aspect is that even some hard-core boxing fans still don't realize what Nelson has accomplished in his 17-year career, and how damn hard it would be for anyone else to duplicate it.

Predictably, there were plenty of people quick to label Nelson's victory a hollow one because of the demons Ruelas was battling. I'm not buying it. If you knew Ruelas' manager, Dan Goossen, the way I do, you'd know that he wasn't going to take a fight at such a crucial time if he didn't think Ruelas would win, ghosts or no ghosts. And throughout his training, Ruelas appeared to be the powerful, confident champion he was before that fateful encounter with Garcia in April.

Nelson won because he found a way to win. While he was training for his 1988 showdown with a faded Larry Holmes, Mike Tyson told me Cus D'Amato had warned him not about taking old fighters lightly, but about taking old *great* fighters lightly. An aging great, D'Amato believed, is capable of summoning one more clutch effort when it is least expected. Holmes never did find it against Tyson, but he sure did when he upset Ray Mercer four years later.

You have to wonder, though, if D'Amato would have ever been bold enough to include a 37-year-old 130-pounder in his theory. Nelson's longevity is extremely rare in the lighter weight classes, where so many fighters either retire or cease being serious threats while they're still in their 20s. (See Jeff Chandler, Barry McGuigan, Rocky Lockridge, etc.) After another 130-pounder, Tracy Patterson, lost to Arturo Gatti in December, HBO's Larry Merchant questioned how much of a future the vanquished had as a title threat. "Thirty years old is not young for a fighter in that [weight] category," he said.

Nelson has kept on keeping on despite obstacles that might have drained the spirit out of a man of lesser character: the death of a wife from cancer, false rumors that he was infected with AIDS, and a long-

term contract with Don King that too often relegated him to non-televised undercards and years spent in the shadow of the Tysons and Chavezes. Nelson likes to call himself "The Professor" because he fancies himself as someone who teaches his rivals a boxing lesson. But the truth is, a more fitting nickname would be "The Student." The Ghanaian doesn't teach boxing nearly as well as he learns it. In an age when fighters usually try to avoid at all costs return bouts with opponents who have troubled them, Nelson relishes such tests. In fact, he has surpassed Freddy Krueger, Michael Myers, and Jason Vorhees to gain the distinction of being the most dangerous man you could ever encounter in a sequel.

The record practically defies boxing logic. Dropped by a left hook and barely able to gain only a split decision over powerhitter Mario Martinez in 1988, Nelson came back almost a year to the day later and dominated the Mexican in every round, finally halting him in the 12th. Martinez' best weapon, his left hook, was rendered completely ineffective. After being awarded a gift draw against Jeff Fenech and nearly being kayoed in the bout's final seconds in Las Vegas in '91, Nelson traveled to Fenech's *home turf* of Australia for the rematch in '92. Fenech, the heavy favorite, went down in the first round, was never in the fight, and was put away in the eighth. And now, Nelson has beaten the younger Ruelas much easier the second time than he did in their first matchup.

Count Nelson out, and the ref just might count you out.

Nelson has not always been gracious after losing, winning by disputed decision, or fighting to a draw. After every one of his subpar performances, he has delivered a grocery list of excuses. But instead of sitting back and finding comfort in them, he has rebounded from most of the sloppy showings in such a way that even we born skeptics are left wondering if maybe some of those excuses were indeed valid. With the exception of Muhammad Ali, has there ever been a fighter in the past 30 years who could learn so much from a first meeting with an opponent, make adjustments, and so easily control the rematch?

One regret in my career is not enough time spent in the company of Nelson to find out more about what makes him the fighter he is. We met once, in the trailer that was serving as his dressing room at the Las Vegas Hilton prior to his return bout with Martinez. The heat outside was scorching, yet Nelson had all of the windows of the trailer closed. It felt as though we were sitting inside a microwave.

What sticks in my mind the most about that afternoon is my attempts to interview Nelson, his cooperation despite not speaking English very well, and the interference of his friend, cruiserweight Patrick Lumumba, who kept telling me to stop bothering the champion. With Lumumba protesting, Nelson eventually turned to him and told him to shut up. Rare attention was being focused on Azumah, and he sure as hell wasn't going to have it chased away.

Now, in the 17th season of his game, Nelson has finally earned a little more of that attention. And anyone who tries to diminish it ought to shut up as well. ■

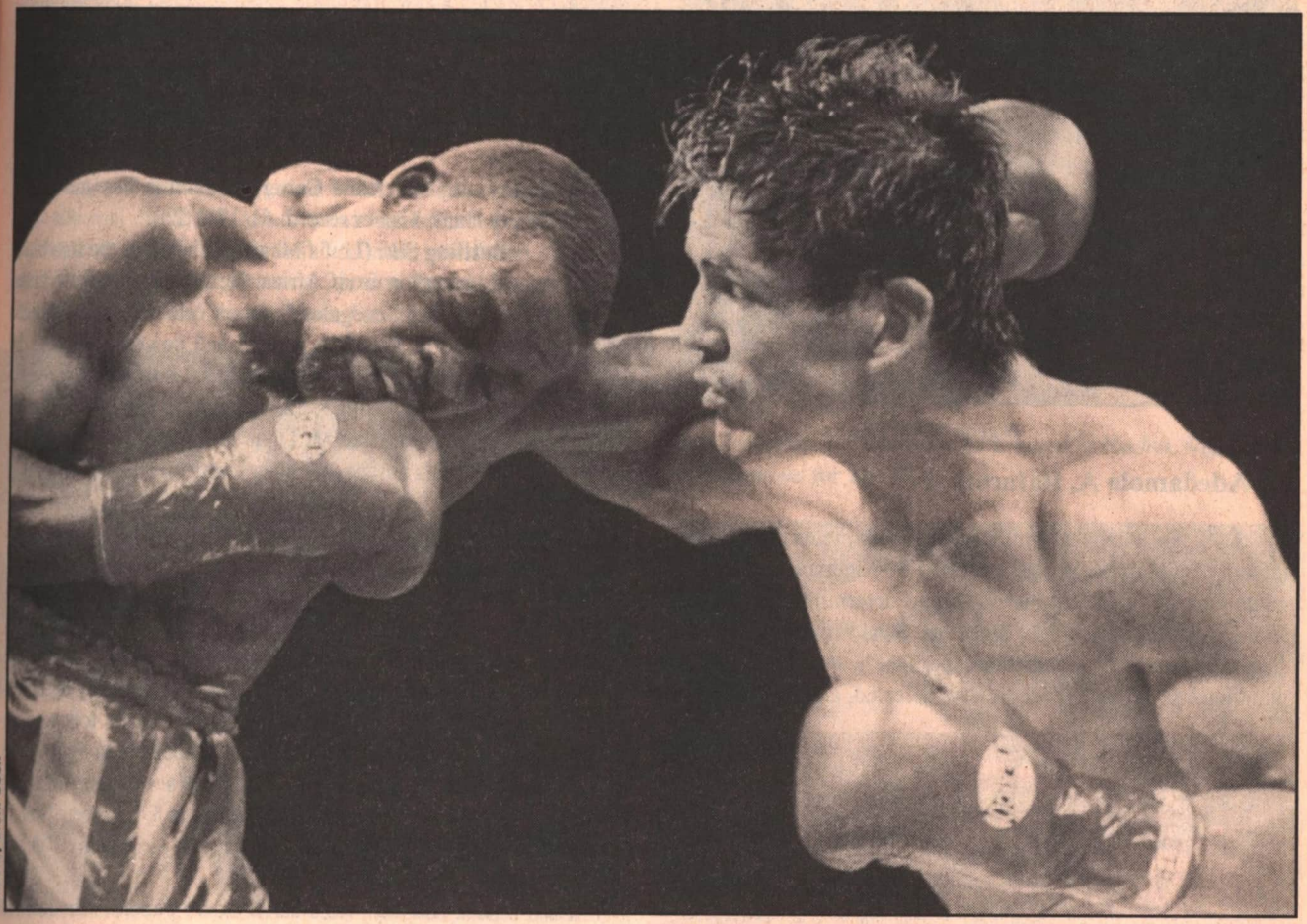


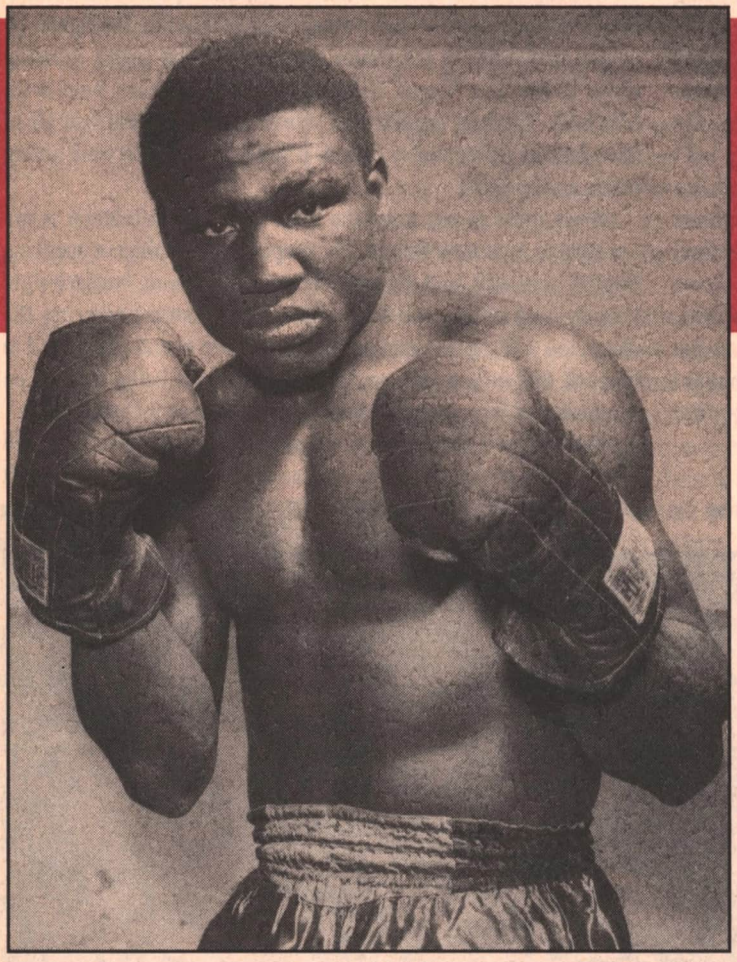
Photo by Brian Cook

Nelson and Ruelas mix it up during their rematch. Instead of focusing on Nelson's unlikely victory, the media highlighted Ruelas' emotional plight.

The All-Time Top 10 Of Africa

(excluding South Africa)

1. Dick Tiger
2. Battling Siki
3. Azumah Nelson
4. Hogan (Kid) Bassey
5. Ayub Kalule
6. Sumbu Kalambay
7. Cornelius Boza-Edwards
8. Ike Quartey
9. John Mugabi
10. David Kotey



Nigeria's Dick Tiger

By Adedamola A. Ifaturoti

Who was the best British fighter of all-time? The best Mexican? The best Japanese? The debate will rage forever. In an attempt to fuel the fire, or at least offer some perspective, THE RING has asked several of its correspondents to compile their personal top-10 lists.

•**Dick Tiger** (Richard Ihetu) was a multiple champion during the era of eight weight classes. The 5'8" Nigerian was an action combatant of immense durability and determination. He twice won the middleweight title, defeating Gene Fullmer in 1963 and Joey Giardello in '65, and added the light heavyweight title, outpointing Jose Torres in '66. He also defeated, among others, Nino Benvenuti, Hurricane Carter, Florentino Fernandez, and Henry Hank. Career record: 61-17-3 (26).

•**Battling Siki** (Louis Mbarrick Fall) was the first black world champion from Africa. Before gaining fistic fame, "The Singular Senegalese" was a celebrated French hero during World War I. A rugged and powerful brawler, he won the light heavyweight title by surprising Georges Carpentier (KO 6) in 1922. Though he lost the title in his first defense to Mike McTigue and squandered his talents with drinking sprees, his place in history is secure. Career record: 64-25-5 (35).

•**Azumah Nelson** is the greatest Ghanaian boxer of all-time, and arguably the best Sub-Saharan fighter of contemporary times. Aptly nicknamed "The Professor," he's enjoyed lengthy reigns at two weights. In 1984, he won the WBC featherweight title from Wilfredo Gomez (KO 11). After making six defenses, he vacated and rose to junior lightweight, winning the WBC title by outpointing Mario Martinez in 1988. Ten successful defenses followed. In 1990, Nelson tried for a third title, losing a decision to lightweight champion Pernell Whitaker. Among his victims: Marcos Villasana, Juan LaPorte, and Jeff Fenech. In December, Nelson regained the WBC 130-pound crown, kayoing Gabe Ruelas. Career record: 37-3-2 (27).

•**Hogan (Kid) Bassey** was a 5'3½" boxer-puncher who learned to fight on the docks of Lagos, Nigeria. He fought mostly out of

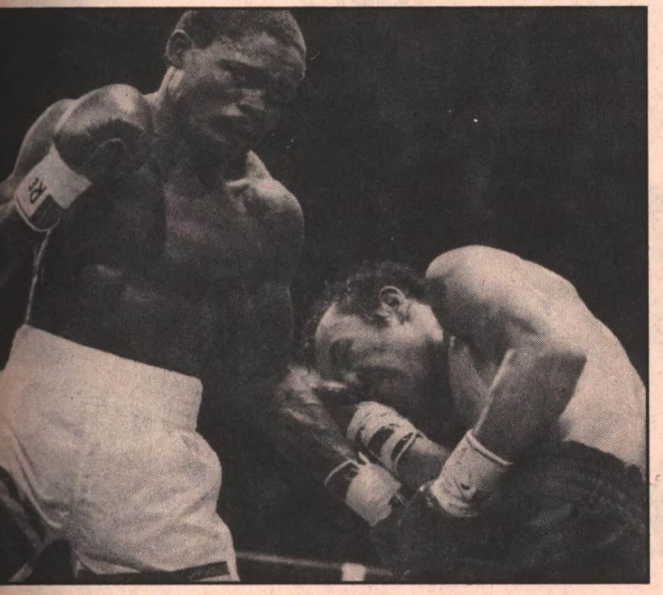
England, turning pro at flyweight and growing into a workmanlike featherweight. He won the vacant world title by rising from the canvas to shoot down the favored Cherif Hamia (KO 10) in 1957. He made one defense before being dethroned by Davey Moore. His victims included Miguel Berrios, Jean Sneyers, and a faded Willie Pep. Career record: 59-13-2 (21).

•**Ayub Kalule** was a clever southpaw from Uganda who, while no kayo puncher, was far stronger than most of his opponents. Fighting out of Denmark, he won the British Commonwealth middleweight title, then dropped down to junior middleweight and captured WBA honors by outpointing Masashi Kudo in 1979. He made four defenses before being dethroned by Sugar Ray Leonard (KO by 9) in '81. He was good enough to win the European middleweight title in 1985, and long after his prime. Career record: 46-4 (23).

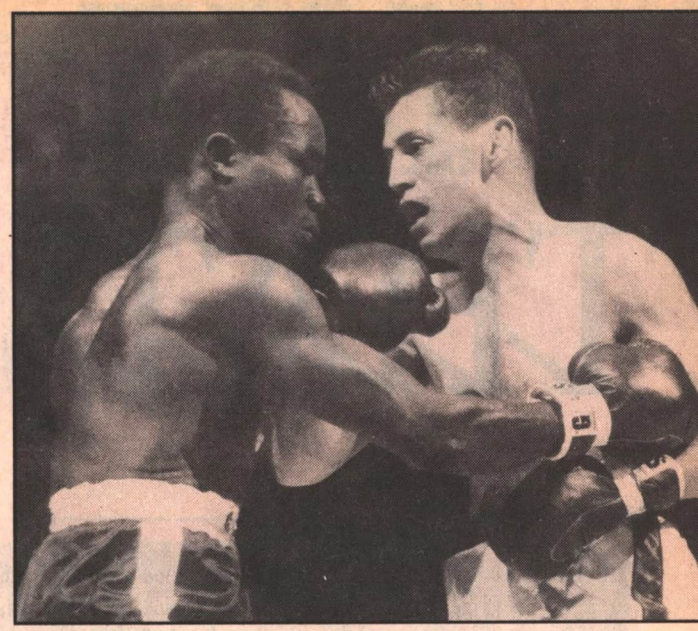
•**Sumbu Kalambay** is the best fighter ever produced by Zaire. Based in Italy, he was a quick middleweight who was skilled enough to issue Mike McCallum his first loss in 33 bouts. He won the vacant WBA title by scoring a points victory over Iran Barkley in 1987, and followed with defenses against McCallum (W 12), Robbie Sims (W 12), and Doug DeWitt (KO 7). In a shocker, he was dethroned by the featherfisted Michael Nunn via one-punch, first-round kayo. Record: 57-6-1 (32).

•**Cornelius Boza-Edwards** was among the most exciting TV performers of the early-'80s, when the junior lightweight division featured fight of the year candidates in nearly every title bout. The Ugandan-born, England-based southpaw was a classic boxer who invariably brawled. He won the WBC title by decisioning Bazooka Limon in 1981, and successfully defended against Bobby Chacon (KO 13). Other victims included John Verderosa, Robert Elizondo, Choo Choo Brown, Melvin Paul, and John Montes. Career record: 45-7-1 (34).

•**Ike Quartey** is the reigning WBA welterweight champion. The potential of the Ghanaian seems limitless, and a unification victory over WBC titlist Pernell Whitaker would seal his greatness. A terrific puncher, Quartey, 25, won the African junior welter title in only his 12th pro bout. He captured the WBA 147-



Ghana's Azumah Nelson lands low vs. Mario Martinez



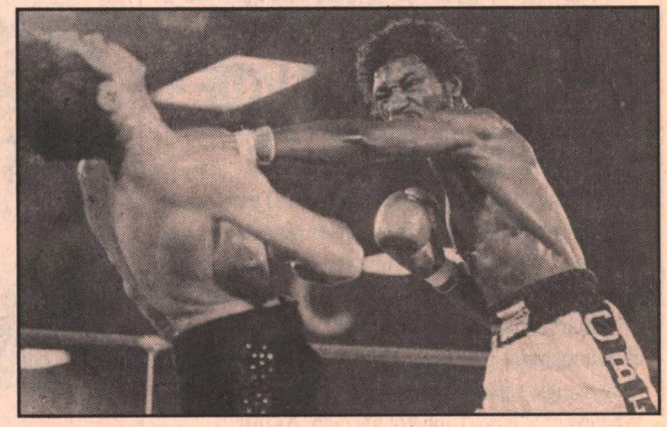
Nigeria's Hogan Bassey moves inside against Carmelo Costa

pound crown by stopping the previously unbeaten Crisanto Espana (KO 11) in 1994, and has made three defenses. Career record: 30-0 (26).

•**John Mugabi** used to say in his limited English, "I will knock him out." It was fitting, as the Ugandan-born slugger, a silver medalist at the 1980 Olympics, scored kayos in all of his pro wins. He ran into Marvin Hagler (KO by 11) in his first title shot, but succeeded in his third try, crushing Rene Jacquot (KO 1) for the WBC 154-pound crown in 1989. He beat, among others, Frank Fletcher, Curtis Parker, Earl Hargrove, and Hard Rock Green, but also suffered first-round kayo defeats at the hands of Terry Norris and Gerald McClellan. Career record: 38-4 (38).

•**David Kotey**, nicknamed "Poison," won the featherweight title of Africa, the British Commonwealth title, and, in 1975, the WBC title, surprising Ruben Olivares on points. The Ghanaian made two defenses before losing a decision to Danny Lopez in Accra. In an international sense, his time at the top was brief, but his victory over the legendary Olivares merits a spot in the top 10. Career record: 38-6-1 (23). ■

Adedamola A. Ifaturoti, who is based in Ibadan, Nigeria, is a correspondent for The Ring.



Uganda's Corny Boza-Edwards connects vs. Bobby Chacon

THE YEAR THAT WAS...

...Was More Than The Return Of Mike Tyson

By Steve Farhood

The biggest fight of 1995, which lasted 89 seconds, was hardly the best. The biggest heavyweight, George Foreman, lost his unofficial title, not to mention his seat on Jay Leno's couch, to a blob named Butterbean. The biggest trial, Don King's, failed to produce a definitive outcome. And on the biggest night, November 4, when boxing had a chance to grab the spotlight, it came up all thumbs.

Still, as always, we had a lot of fun, shed some tears, and wondered what 1996 would bring.

Here, then, is an informal review of the year gone by.

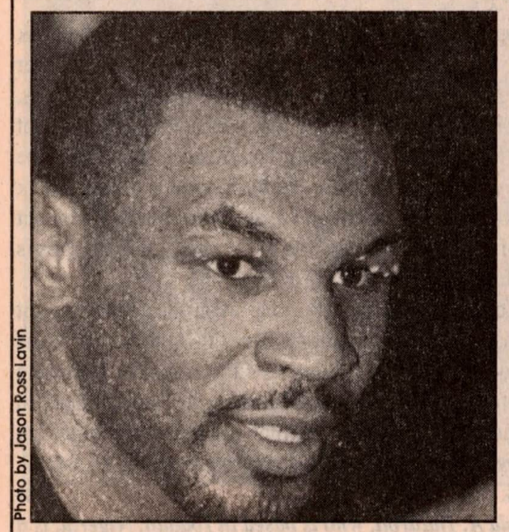


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

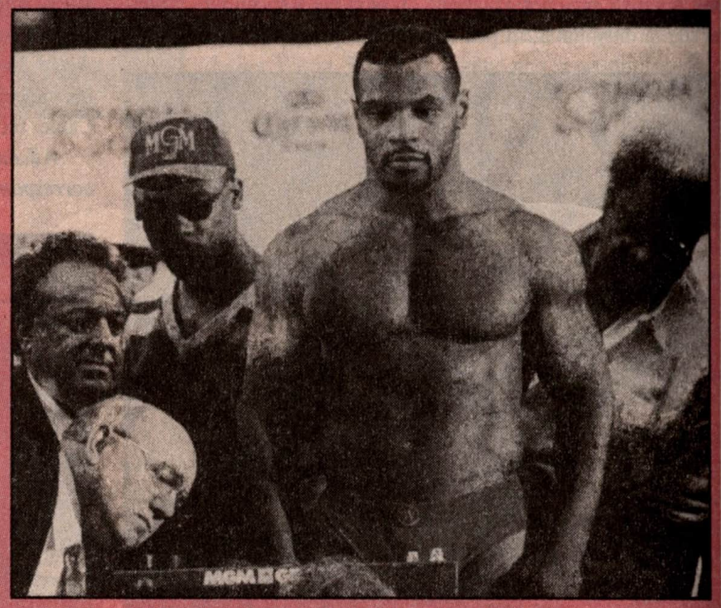
The biggest boxing story of 1995 was the return to the ring of former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson, who had been incarcerated for more than three years. As a result of his return, boxing is buzzing again.

DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE

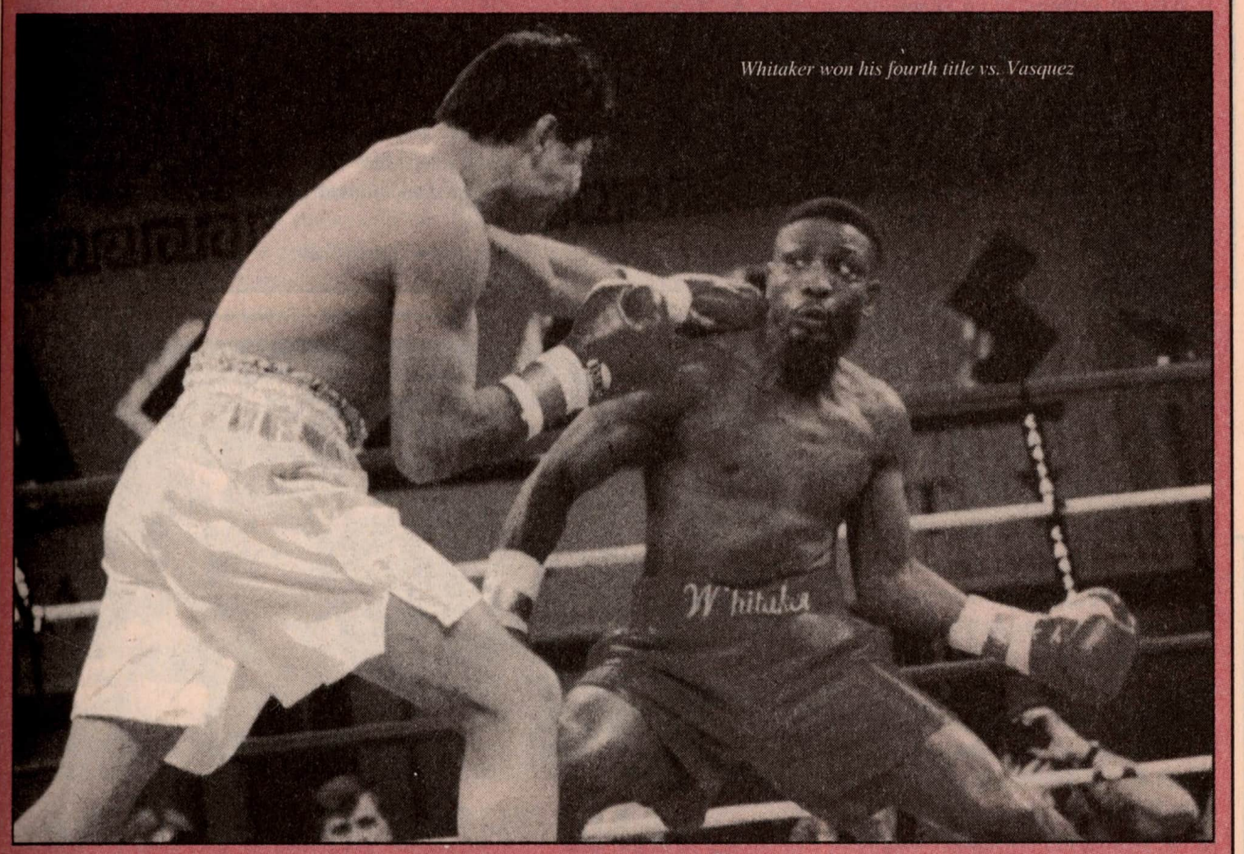
On March 30, in Cleveland, Mike Tyson, five days after being released from prison, announces his continued allegiance to promoter Don King. Had King enticed Tyson with a suitcase full of millions of dollars? Had he, on the night before Tyson's announcement, begged at the feet of the former heavyweight champion, as some reports suggested? Whatever the case, King got his man. As usual.

WHOEVER SAID LIFE WAS FAIR?

On August 19, Peter McNeeley gets paid $540,000 to crash-land against Mike Tyson, then extends his 15 minutes of fame by starring with manager-trainer Vinny Vecchione in a national Pizza Hut commercial. On December 8, Butterbean, a 300-pound heavyweight and former toughman contestant, knocks 'em dead on *The Tonight Show*. Meanwhile, workmanlike world champions like Tom Johnson continue to go unrecognized. Hey, Tom, have you considered war paint and Indian feathers?



The return of Tyson included a return to Don King



Whitaker won his fourth title vs. Vasquez

LIKE JAWS, RECORDS ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN

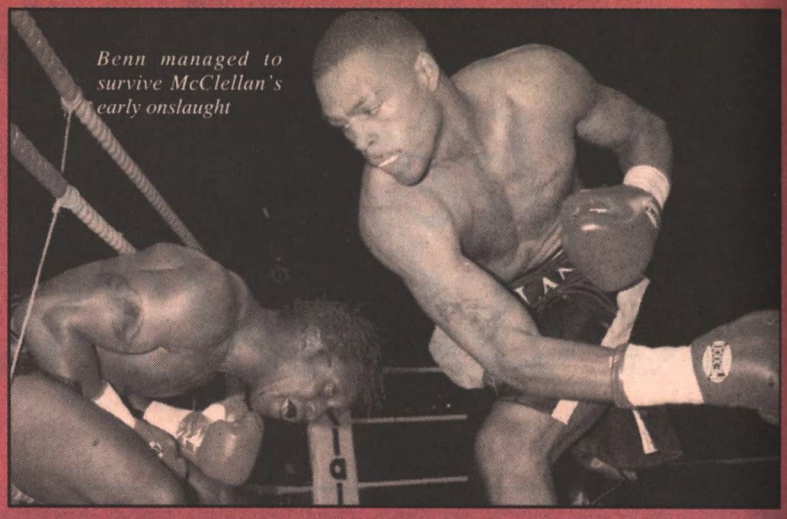
•On January 28, Rafael and Gabe Ruelas become the first brothers to successfully defend world titles on the same card. Rafael, the IBF lightweight champion, stops Billy Schwer, and Gabe, the WBC super featherweight champion, halts Freddie Liberatore.

•On March 4, Pernell Whitaker becomes the fourth fighter in history to win world titles in at least four different weights when he decisions WBA junior middleweight champion Julio Cesar Vasquez. The others are Sugar Ray Leonard (five divisions), Thomas Hearns, and Roberto Duran.

•On April 22, Danny Romero becomes the first American-born world flyweight champion in more than 60 years when he dethrones IBF champion Francisco Tejedor on points.

•On August 19, Mike Tyson, fighting for the first time in more than four years, beats Peter McNeeley in one round. A sellout crowd of 16,736 at the MGM Grand Garden in Las Vegas produces an all-time record gate of more than $14-million, and the total revenues reach a record $96-million.

THE THREE BEST TITLE FIGHTS



Benn managed to survive McClellan's early onslaught

Nigel Benn KO 10 Gerald McClellan, February 25, London: WBC super middleweight champion Benn barely escapes a nightmarish first round, and for the rest of the way, the big punchers trade momentum and test each other to their very cores. In an initially confusing, and ultimately tragic, conclusion, McClellan surrenders in the 10th, then collapses shortly afterward. He undergoes surgery to reduce swelling in his brain. The operation saves his life, but leaves him virtually blind and deaf.

Vincent Pettway KO 6 Simon Brown, April 29, Landover, Maryland: Who's up, who's down? IBF junior middleweight champion Pettway twice rises from the canvas to kayo former titlist Brown. The most chilling scene of the year: As a semiconscious Brown is being counted out while flat on his back, he instinctively flails his arms as if still punching.

Saman Sorjaturong KO 7 Chiquita Gonzalez, July 15, Inglewood, California: You think defending WBC-IBF junior flyweight champion Gonzalez would've learned from his 1993 Fight of the Year vs. Michael Carbajal that it's never over until the fat referee sings 10. Seemingly on the verge of a stoppage victory, Chiquita is hammered by the battered and bruised Thai challenger, who scores a most unlikely kayo.

The runners-up: Marcelo Dominguez W 12 Sergei Kobozev, Alejandro Gonzalez KO 10 Kevin Kelley

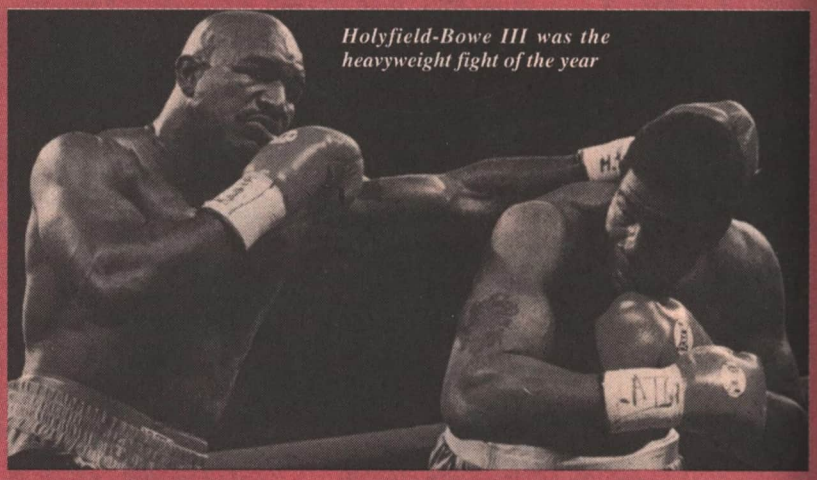
THE THREE BEST NON-TITLE FIGHTS

Merqui Sosa Tech. Draw 7 Prince Charles Williams, January 13, Atlantic City: The fight is so brutal, the ringside doctor calls a halt because *both men* are absorbing too much punishment.

Kevin Kelley KO 9 Ricardo Rivera, March 31, Chester, West Virginia: Former featherweight champion Kelley survives a knockdown and a face-beating to rally against unknown Puerto Rican Rivera in what announcer Al Bernstein calls the greatest comeback in 15 years of ESPN boxing.

Merqui Sosa KO 10 Prince Charles Williams, June 30, Philadelphia: Run the first one back. Only this time, The Prince looks old enough to be King and ends up in the hospital.

The runners-up: Fred Pendleton KO 10 Darryll Tyson, Fred Pendleton KO 8 Tony Lopez



Holyfield-Bowe III was the heavyweight fight of the year

... AND THREE HIGH-PROFILE PUNCHOUTS

Roy Jones KO 6 Vinny Pazienza, June 24, Atlantic City: Ouch! one-time lightweight Paz' bulk proves useless against slick IBF super middleweight champion Jones, and his aggressiveness buys him a beating.

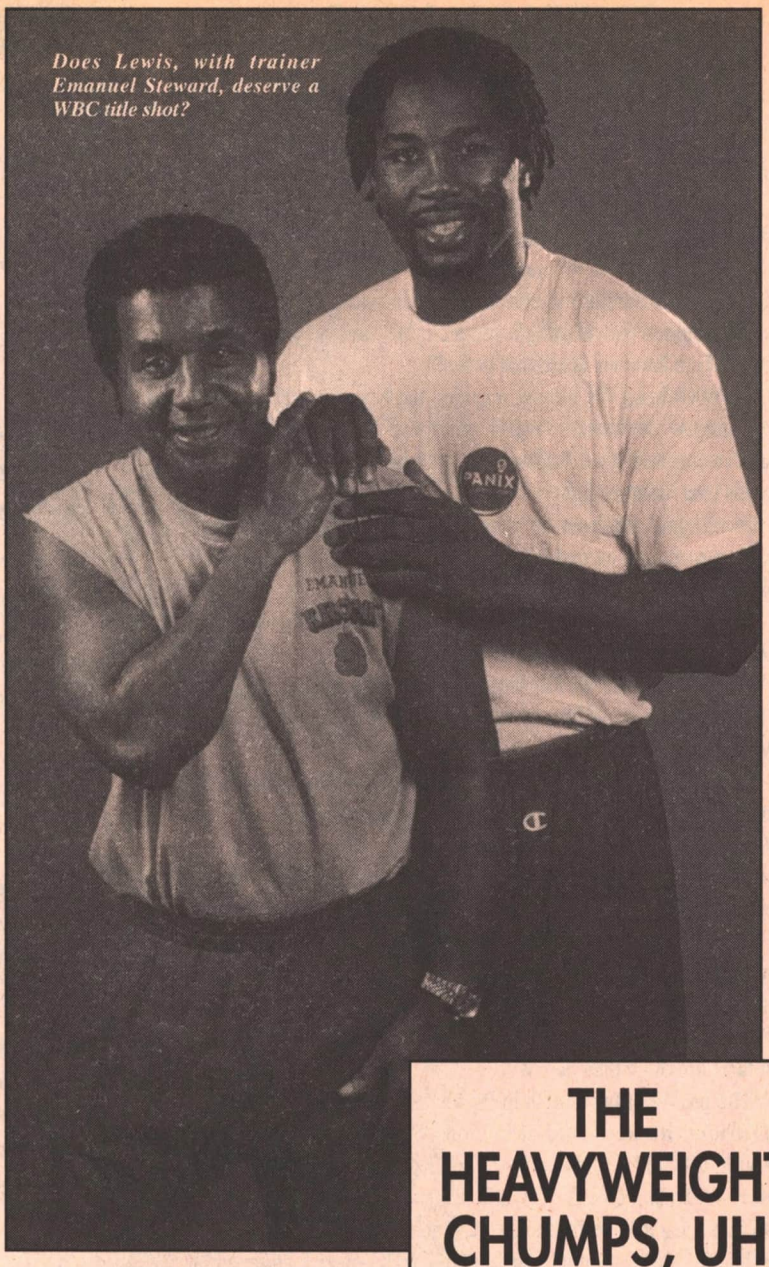
Lennox Lewis KO 6 Tommy Morrison, October 7, Atlantic City: A command performance from Sir Lennox. Hope Queen Liz appreciated it. One thing's for sure: The Duke has no clue.

Riddick Bowe KO 8 Evander Holyfield, November 4, Las Vegas: In the third and final chapter of their memorable rivalry, Bowe suffers the first knockdown of his career, then picks himself up and kayos a strangely lethargic Holyfield. There's no belt at stake, but "Big Daddy" wins the unofficial title of best heavyweight in the world.

UNTITLED OR UNENTITLED?

In 1995, things were even more topsy-turvy than usual at the three major alphabet organizations. See if you can follow: The long-reigning Genaro Hernandez gave up the WBA junior lightweight title to fight lightweight Oscar De La Hoya, who won the IBF title by stopping Rafael Ruelas, then gave it up because he didn't want to fight number-one contender Miguel Julio. (Deep breath.) In November, IBF junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu was stripped because he refused to defend in Colombia against mandatory challenger Hugo Pineda. (A Colombian promoter had won the purse bid.) But a judge ruled in his favor, and Australia's Tszyu was beltless for only 12 hours. As we went to press, he was scheduled to face Pineda in January. (Deep breath.) In May, heavyweight Lennox Lewis kayoed Lionel Butler in what was billed as a WBC title eliminator, but remained ranked second, behind Mike Tyson, who will get the first crack at champion Frank Bruno. (Deep breath.) And then there's Big George Foreman, who in 1994 won the WBA and IBF heavyweight titles by knocking out Michael Moorer. Foreman was stripped of the WBA belt because he defended in April against the unrated Axel Schulz, and not retread Tony Tucker. Then he gave up the IBF belt because that organization was about to strip him for his refusal to meet Schulz in a rematch. (The first fight was decided by controversial decision.)

Got all that? If you do, you're doing better than we are.



Does Lewis, with trainer Emanuel Steward, deserve a WBC title shot?

THE LIGHTERWEIGHT FIGHTERS OF THE YEAR

Boxing's most exciting performers in 1995 may have been a pair of unbeaten junior featherweights who are heading for a cataclysmic clash. England's "Prince" Naseem Hamed, a cocky, charming southpaw of Arabic extraction, has been sensational at 118 and 122 pounds, and in '95, he jumped to featherweight and blew away the respected Steve Robinson. Barrera, a stoic pressure fighter with underrated boxing skills, is set to succeed Julio Cesar Chavez as the next great champion from Mexico. His '95 included wins over Daniel Jimenez and Maui Diaz.

Barrera says he's willing to fight Hamed in Europe. Hamed may seek some much-needed U.S. exposure before committing to such a fight. Track these guys in 1996. They're worth the watch.

THE HEAVYWEIGHT CHUMPS, UH, *CHAMPS*

What's wrong with this picture? The three best heavyweights in the world are Riddick Bowe, Lennox Lewis, and Mike Tyson. But the three world champions, all of whom were crowned in 1995, are Frank Bruno (WBC), Bruce Seldon (WBA), and Frans Botha (IBF). Bruno's been kayoed by Lewis and Tyson. Seldon's been kayoed by Bowe. Botha, who's miraculously managed to compile a record of 36-0, would probably be kayoed by the former champions' *trainers*.

EVERY DAY IS OLD-TIMERS' DAY

•Ron Lyle, 53, won a couple of four-rounders. He wants a rematch with George Foreman. He's the only one.

•Earnie Shavers, 50, was stopped in the second round by Brian Yates, who had won just one of his previous 12 pro bouts.

•George Foreman, 47, retained the IBF heavyweight title by defeating Axel Schulz via controversial decision. He was subsequently stripped for refusing a rematch. He says he'll fight once more. Where have we heard that before?

•Larry Holmes, 46, almost regained the heavyweight title, losing a narrow decision to WBC champion Oliver McCall. You could've guessed what followed: a promise to retire, then a few months later, another fight.

•Joe Bugner, 45, won the Australian heavyweight title by outpointing someone named Vince Cervi. Hey, give him credit for going 12 rounds.

•Roberto Duran, 44, lost a one-sided decision to Vinny Pazienza. At least he was paid well.

•Alexis Arguello, 43, lost his second comeback bout, a decision to Scott Walker. He plans to fight on, but he'll never get Aaron Pryor again.

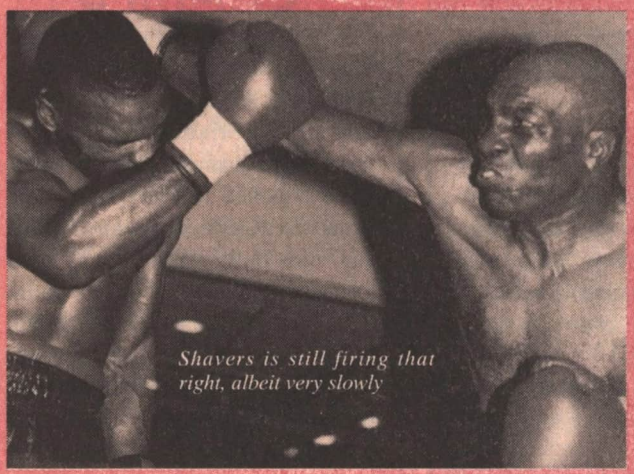
•Mike Weaver, 43, and Leon Spinks, 41, won fights in the same month. Betcha we'll be saying the same thing in the year 2005.

•Dennis Andries, 42, continues to contend for British cruiserweight honors. He's managed to outlast Jeff Harding.

•Trevor Berbick, 41, upset Melvin Foster, then lost to James Thunder. The streetfight with Larry Holmes was better than both of those fights.

•Lupe Pintor, 40, continued his comeback, during which he's lost far more often than he's won.

•The pre-40 brigade of fighters who either began or continued comebacks: former world champions Gene Hatcher, 36, Leslie Stewart, 34, and Jeff Fenech, 31, and former contenders Mike Baker, 43, Ruben Castillo, 38, and James "Hard Rock" Green, 37. And in an inspired performance, Azumah Nelson, 37, fighting for the first time in 19 months, regained the WBC super featherweight title by stopping Gabe Ruelas in five rounds.



Shavers is still firing that right, albeit very slowly

Foreman-Schulz ranked with the biggest robberies of the year

ROBBERIES—WITH LOTS OF EYEWITNESSES

George Foreman W 12 Axel Schulz, April 22, Las Vegas: Compared to the lumbering Foreman, Schulz is as fast as a young Muhammad Ali. His high-energy performance seems more than enough to earn him the IBF heavyweight title, but two of the judges score for Big George, with the third calling it a draw.

Hector Acero-Sanchez D 12 Daniel Zaragoza, June 2, Ledyard, Connecticut: WBC super bantamweight champion Acero-Sanchez is dropped in the fourth round and battered throughout, yet hangs on to the belt. Justice is served in the rematch, when Zaragoza wins by split decision.

Miguel Angel Gonzalez W 12 Lamar Murphy, August 19, Las Vegas: WBC lightweight champion Gonzalez is pounded along the ropes for much of the contest. He loses two points for punching low—and still manages to retain the title by majority decision.

Arturo Gatti W 12 Tracy Patterson, December 15, New York City: Patterson, defending the IBF junior lightweight title for the first time, makes the busier Gatti miss for all 12 rounds. Interesting: Most of those who watched on TV thought Gatti won, and most ringsiders saw it the other way.

SAYING GOODBYE

At least three top-level fighters retired (for now) in '95:

•Two-division former champion Buddy McGirt, who said goodbye after a stoppage loss to Andrew Council.

•Longtime middleweight and super middleweight contender Chris Eubank, who retired following a pair of losses to Steve Collins.

•Former WBC bantamweight champion Yasuei Yakushiji, who hung 'em up shortly after losing the title to Wayne McCullough.

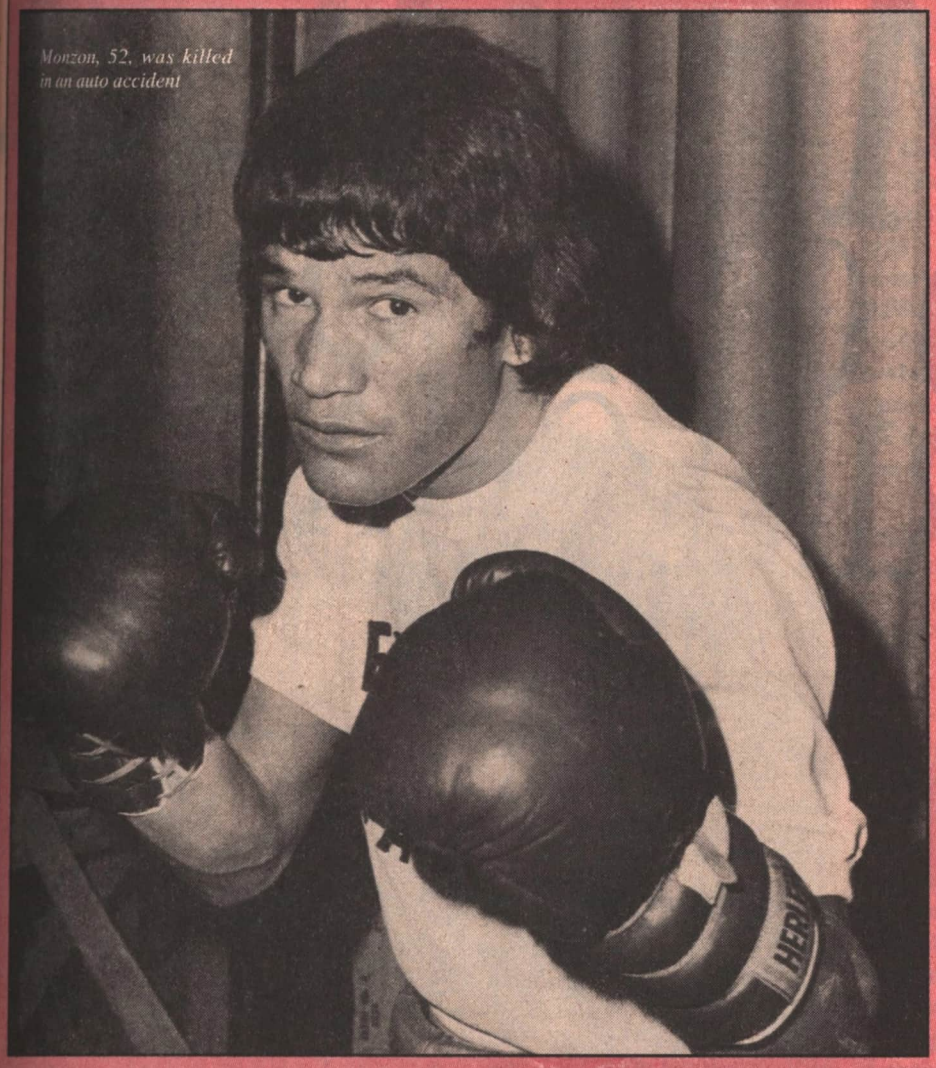
THE FINAL COUNT

The following boxing figures passed on in '95:

•Carlos Monzon, 52, who was killed in an auto accident in Argentina. The hall of fame middleweight champion, who was serving an 11-year prison sentence for murder, was on a weekend furlough.

•Lope "Papa" Sarreal, 90, Filipino manager and promoter, who is best known for his association with his son-in-law, former junior lightweight champion Flash Elorde.

•Howard Cosell, 77, who, as the preeminent TV sports broadcaster of his time, was closely associated with boxing, and especially Floyd Patterson, Muhammad Ali, and Sugar Ray Leonard.



Monzon, 52, was killed in an auto accident

•Lou Ambers, 81, who ranks with the greatest lightweight champions in history.

•Rick "Elvis" Parker, 39, a promoter and manager, who was shot to death by one of his former fighters, Tim "Doc" Anderson, in a Florida hotel room.

•Jimmy Garcia, 23, who died as a result of complications from a brain injury suffered 13 days earlier, during his unsuccessful bid to dethrone WBC super featherweight champion Gabe Ruelas.

•Elvis Alvarez, 30, a former WBA flyweight champion, who was shot to death in Medellin, Colombia.

•Jesse James Hughes, 29, the reigning USBA welterweight champion, whose badly decomposed body was found near his home of Mobile, Alabama. Hughes had been missing for two weeks. Police are treating his death as a murder.

•Walter Cartier, 73, former middleweight contender, who went on to appear in several Hollywood films.

•Buster Mathis, 51, former heavyweight contender, who faced the likes of Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali. He was the father of reigning USBA heavyweight champion Buster Mathis Jr.

•Tong Chon Lee, 32, a South Korean bantamweight, who died of a brain injury suffered during a bout vs. Setsuo Kawamasu.

•James Murray, 25, a Scottish bantamweight, who died of a brain injury suffered during his kayo loss to Drew Docherty.

•Restituto Espineli, 19, a Filipino flyweight, who died of a brain injury suffered during a bout vs. Marlon Carillo.

•Ginger Tshabalala, 29, world-ranked South African cruiserweight, who was shot to death by suspected carjackers in Johannesburg.

AND A FINAL PRAYER

The guttiest fighter of the year is former WBC super bantamweight champion Paul Banke, who is so admirably coping with the fact that he was diagnosed with AIDS. A champion once, a champion always.

Red, White, & Bruised

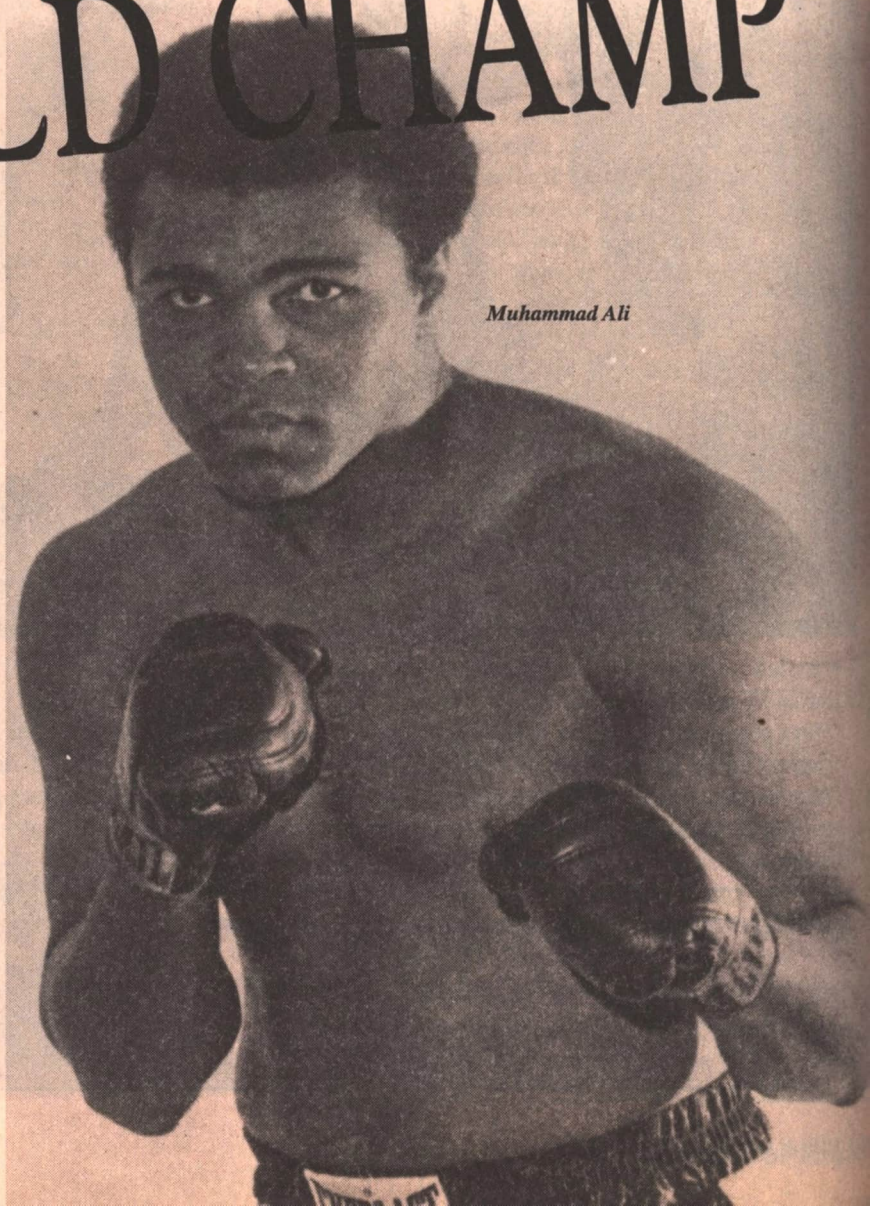
WHEN AMERICA HAD ONLY ONE WORLD CHAMP

By Roger Mooney

As 1975 turned into '76 and America began its celebration of the Bicentennial, heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali was king of the boxing world. Of that there was no dispute, not after what had transpired over those 14 rounds with Joe Frazier in Manila. Ali stood above not only those who donned the gloves, but all athletes. In fact, he was the most recognizable person on the planet.

In the tradition of the fight game, it was almost policy that an American head would carry the heavyweight crown. And that other American fighters would fall in line and claim the belts of the other divisions was assumed.

But in an irony lost on many American fight fans, during the United States' year-long 200th birthday party, the red-white-and-blue made do with only one world champion. Ali was not the tip of the iceberg, but the entire block of ice. In boxing's 11 weight classes, he was the only champion from the USA. With the WBC



Muhammad Ali

Argentina's Victor Galindez

and WBA having gained a stronghold on the sport, the scoreboard read The World 20, The USA 1. A butt-kicking if there ever was one.

"Obviously, it was something very unusual," said Eduardo Lamazon, executive secretary for the WBC. "Tradition shows us that since the beginning of organized boxing, the United States has been the dominant force in the sport."

So where had the American champions gone? Bob Foster gave up the light heavyweight title when he retired in 1974. One month later, England's John Conteh won the vacant WBC belt by defeating Argentina's Jorge Ahumada, and two months after that, another Argentine, Victor Galindez, won the vacant WBA title by stopping America's Len Hutchins. And in June 1975, Bobby Chacon's WBC featherweight title went home with Mexico's Ruben Olivares.

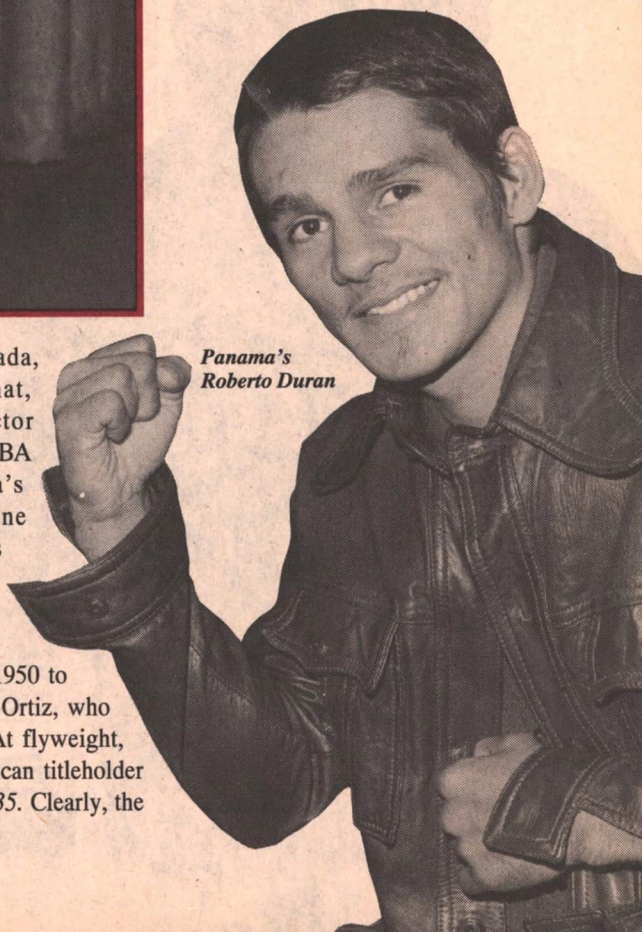
You had to go back to 1950 to find an American, Manuel Ortiz, who reigned at bantamweight. At flyweight, there hadn't been an American titleholder since Midget Wolgast in *1935*. Clearly, the dearth of American champions did not happen overnight.

"Boxing goes in cycles, and we hit the floor on that one," said Pat Putnam, who covered boxing for 30 years for *Sports Illustrated.* "It was a very low point. Then our kids came out of the 1976 Olympics and really revived it. But at the time, it was a down time in American boxing."

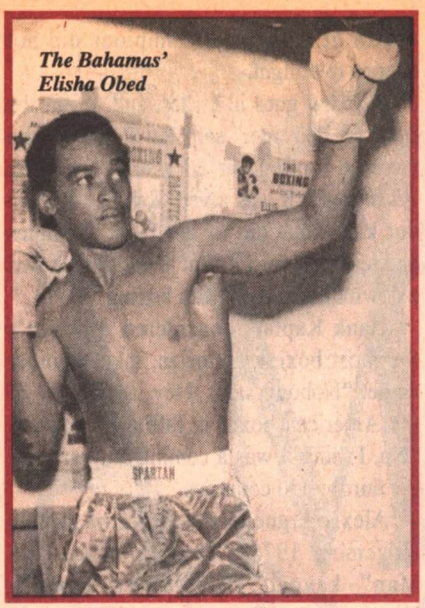
Hank Kaplan, considered America's foremost boxing historian, takes another angle. "Nobody said, 'Hey, the ability of the American boxer is falling,'" he said. "No, I think it was a coming-out party for the third-world countries."

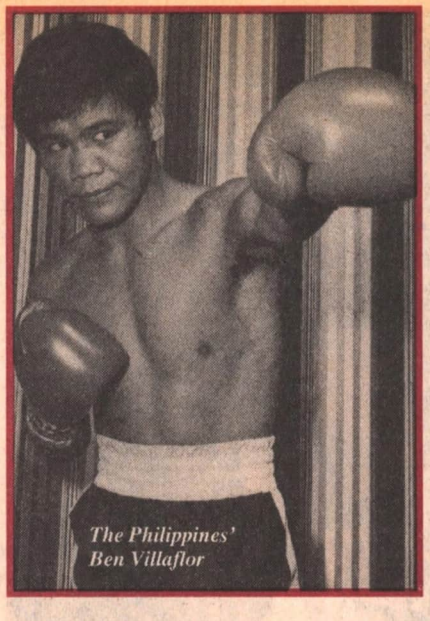
Alexis Arguello was proof of that. In November 1974, "The Explosive Thin Man" kayoed Olivares to become Nicaragua's first world champion. Suddenly, titlists were coming from lands previously unheard of. "I base it strictly on evolution," said Angelo Dundee, who trained Ali at the time. "Little places where you don't expect to see the blossoming of flowers."

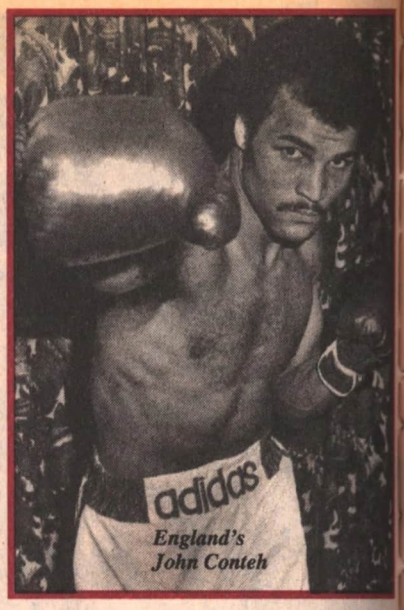
Or in this case, world champions. England, Argentina, Colombia, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines each had two world champions. Mexico had three. America? Only the one.



Panama's Roberto Duran


The Bahamas' Elisha Obed


The Philippines' Ben Villaflor


England's John Conteh

"I don't think it was due to a lack of good American boxers," Lamazon said. "I simply think that, like everything else, boxing has its ups and downs. Coincidentally, at this time, there was a great quality of champions from all over the world."

The first American to break up the party was Carlos Palomino, who was actually born in Mexico. The California welterweight took the WBC title from England's John H. Stracey in June 1976. Danny "Little Red" Lopez was next when he decisioned Ghana's David Kotey for the WBC featherweight crown five months later.

Said Kaplan of Lopez' victory, which came on the road, "The fact that a guy could go to Africa and win a championship is amazing."

To some, the fact that it was an American made it even more amazing. For years, boxing's power base had been located in the USA. But the growth of the WBA and especially the WBC, which were both Latin-based, changed the status quo. One might say it was payback time. "It's human nature to look after your own," Kaplan explained. "Politics as usual."

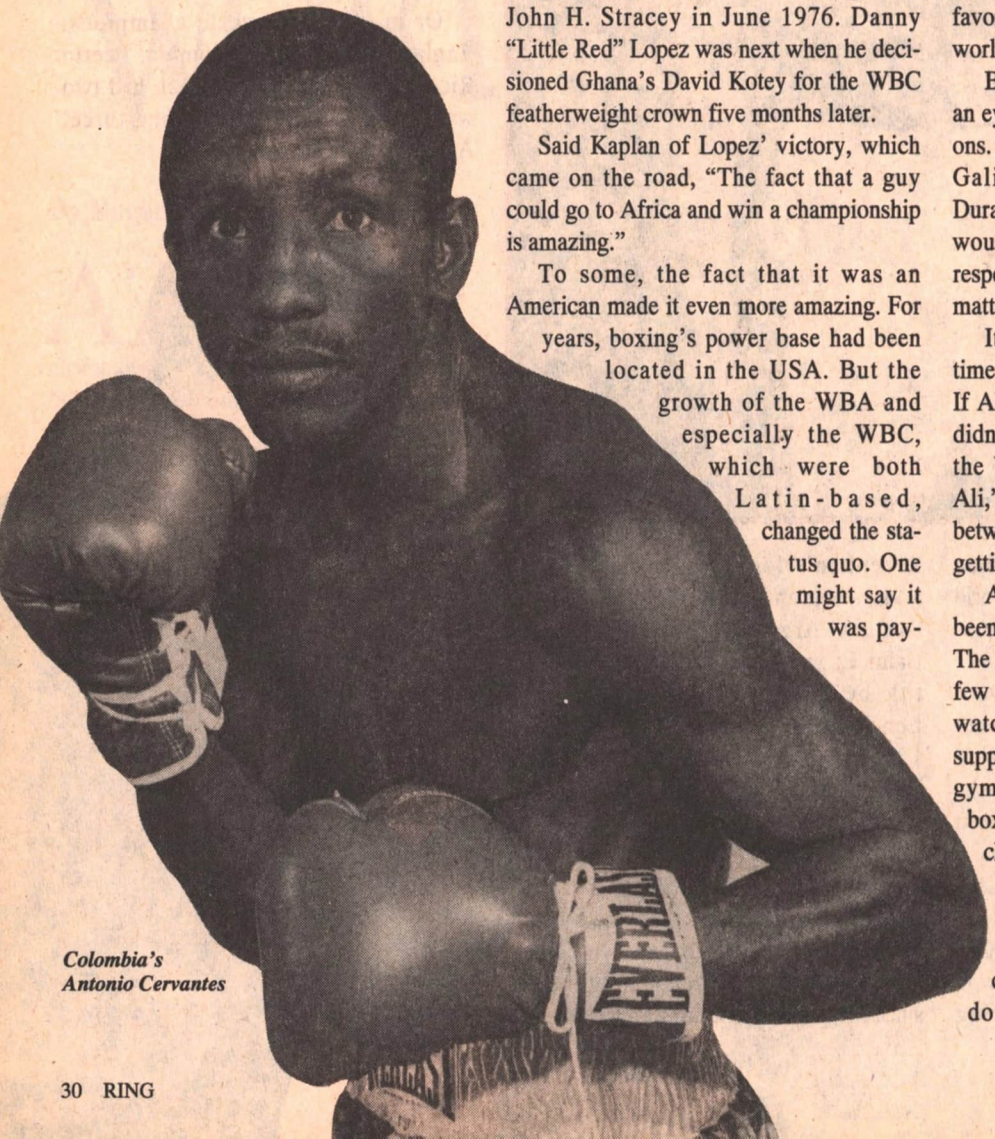
Added Putnam, "We had done the same thing. The old NBA [National Boxing Association, which became the WBA] favored American boxers and shut out the world, so it was a backlash."

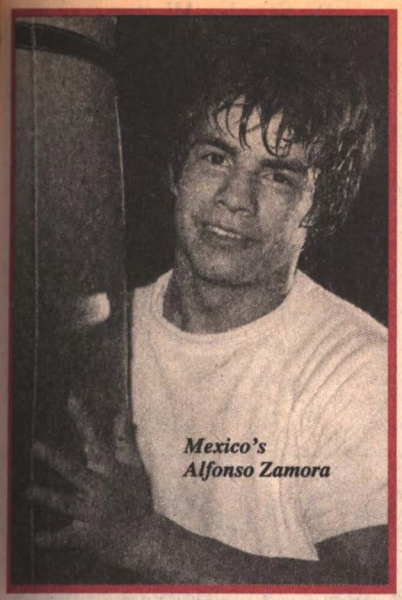
But the boxing community didn't raise an eyebrow to all the foreign-born champions. That was partially because titlists like Galindez, Arguello, Conteh, Roberto Duran, Carlos Monzon, and Miguel Canto would have ascended to the top of their respective divisions during any era, and no matter who was in power.

It was not surprising that during this time, America's interest in boxing waned. If Ali wasn't fighting, then the public just didn't care to watch. "I found myself on the West Coast covering Mexicans and Ali," Putnam said. "That's it. Nothing in between. That's when small boxers started getting coverage."

According to Kaplan, television had been killing boxing at the grass-roots level. The Friday night neighborhood cards were few and far between. People would rather watch the big fight on TV. The lack of support killed the small gyms. The fewer gyms, the fewer boxers. And the fewer boxers, the smaller talent base to produce champions.

The Golden Age had come and gone. Meanwhile, boxing was booming in other countries. "A world champion in a smaller country would do wonders for their boxing," said


Colombia's Antonio Cervantes



Mexico's Alfonso Zamora

England's John H. Stracey

champion, it would get off the floor and rebound with a bang.

There was little reason for optimism in Montreal. At the 1972 Games in Munich, the USA had won a single gold medal, with Sugar Ray Seales triumphing at light welterweight. Otherwise, the competition had been dominated by Cubans, Russians, and Eastern Europeans. But in 1976, Sugar Ray Leonard, Leo Randolph, Howard Davis Jr., and brothers Leon and Michael Spinks won gold medals. Their victories were televised by ABC and chronicled by Howard Cosell, and the American public eagerly absorbed it all. Of the golden quintet, only Davis failed to win a world title as a pro. Within a short period of time, the Americans found themselves at least equal to the rest of the boxing world.

Before the Olympians matured, there were Palomino and Lopez, as well as the likes of Mike Rossman, who dethroned the long-reigning Galindez on the Ali-Spinks II card in September 1978. Junior welterweights Saoul Mamby and Aaron Pryor dethroned foreign-born champions in 1980, as did bantamweight Jeff Chandler, lightweight Hilmer Kenty, and mid-

(Continued on page 59)

A VERY FOREIGN LEGION

The roster of world champions, as of February 1976:

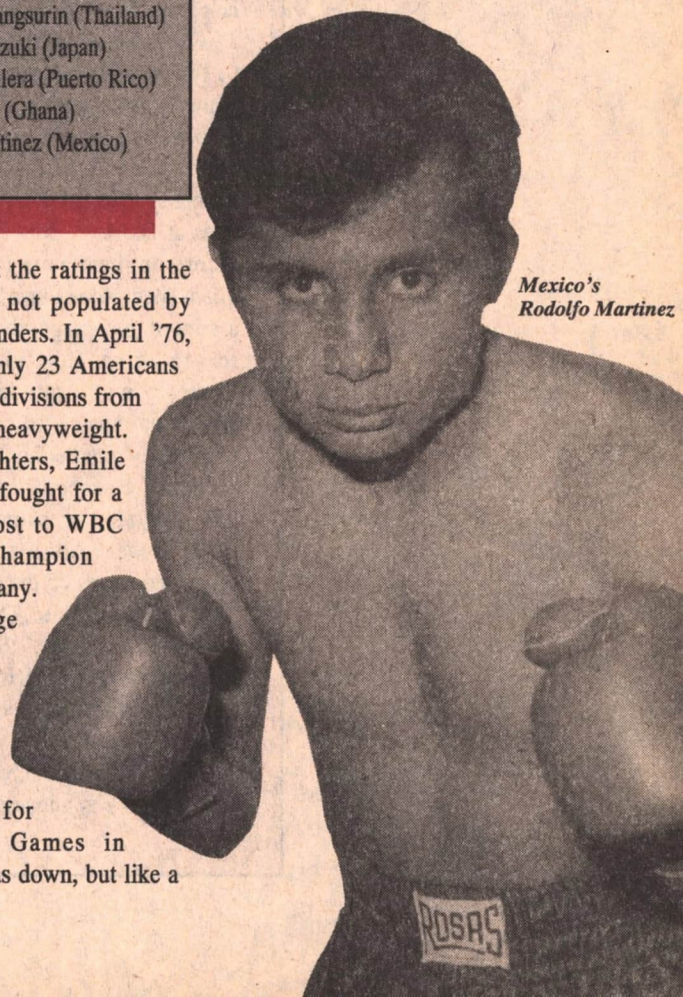
Division	WBA	WBC
Heavyweight	Muhammad Ali (USA)	Muhammad Ali (USA)
Light Heavyweight	Victor Galindez (Argentina)	John Conteh (England)
Middleweight	Carlos Monzon (Argentina)	Rodrigo Valdes (Colombia)
Junior Middleweight	Jae Do Yuh (South Korea)	Elisha Obed (Bahamas)
Welterweight	Angel Espada (Puerto Rico)	John H. Stracey (England)
Junior Welterweight	Antonio Cervantes (Colombia)	Saensak Muangsurin (Thailand)
Lightweight	Roberto Duran (Panama)	Ishimatsu Suzuki (Japan)
Junior Lightweight	Ben Villaflor (Philippines)	Alfredo Escalera (Puerto Rico)
Featherweight	Alexis Arguello (Nicaragua)	David Kotey (Ghana)
Bantamweight	Alfonso Zamora (Mexico)	Rodolfo Martinez (Mexico)

Kaplan. "It was a shot in the arm."

Ali was America's only focal point. As usual, the heavyweight division was crowded with Americans—Ken Norton, Jimmy Young, Duane Bobick. In fact, the entire top 10 was comprised of Americans, including an undefeated Pennsylvanian named Larry Holmes. In two years, Holmes would be the tip of the iceberg, with the iceberg reaching far below the heavyweight surface.

In 1976, Marvin Hagler was only 29 bouts into a career that would bring him the middleweight title in 1980. Thomas Hearns was still a year away from making his pro debut. So early that year, the rest of the world seemed safe from an American invasion. The lightest of weights had almost always been dominated by boxers from countries that simply didn't grow their fighters big. But the ratings in the upper divisions were not populated by strong American contenders. In April '76, there was a total of only 23 Americans listed in the top 10s of divisions from welterweight to light heavyweight. Only one of those fighters, Emile Griffith, subsequently fought for a world title, and he lost to WBC super welterweight champion Ekhard Dagge of Germany.

But a major change was about to take place. While the rest of the world seemingly owned boxing, America's top amateurs were tuning up for the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal. The USA was down, but like a



Mexico's Rodolfo Martinez

By Stanley Weston
Publisher, THE RING Magazine

TIME CAPSULES

THE 18-SECOND MYSTERY

(July 27, 1918)

The mushrooming army of boxing memorabilia collectors learns very quickly that the hobby's most important requisite is what is called provenance (the authentication of any given item). What with scam artists' infestation of every facet of today's vast collectibles market, including everything from Rembrandts to bottle caps, one must do his very best to make sure the item he wants to add to his collection is the real thing before he plunks down his hard-earned bucks.

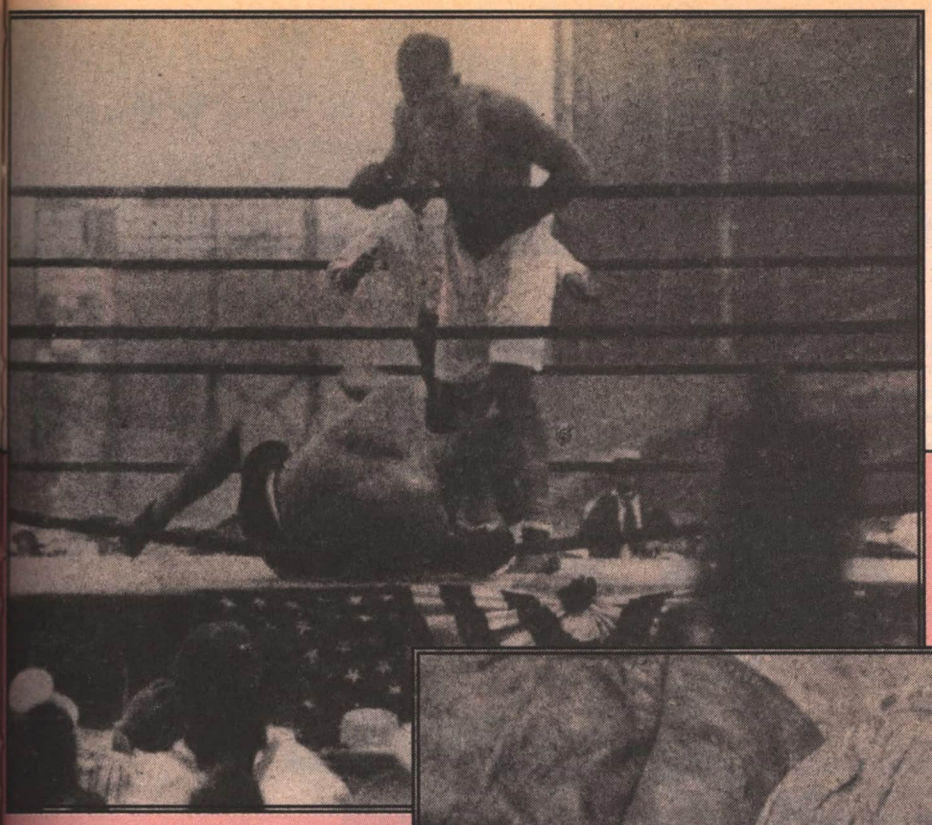
For instance: Back in 1960, during a visit to the prestigious Helms Boxing Hall of Fame in Los Angeles, I photographed a pair of boxing gloves mounted above a small index card that proclaimed, "Worn by Jack Dempsey to knock out Fred Fulton in 18 seconds at Harrison, New Jersey, 1918." Never before or since have I seen such a pair of dilapidated, ripped-up gloves. Not until I saw a print of that image, about a month later, did reality strike. How in hell could this be? Dempsey was a murderous puncher, sure. But to tear apart a pair of padded gloves on the body of another human being? And in the breath of a scant 18 seconds? Impossible! Only a two-ton wrecking ball could do that.

A close examination of the faded, mildewed words on the gloves revealed some interesting things. The fight date reads "August 18, 1918." But later, "19" was inserted above the original "18." Both are incorrect. The fight took place on July 27, 1918.

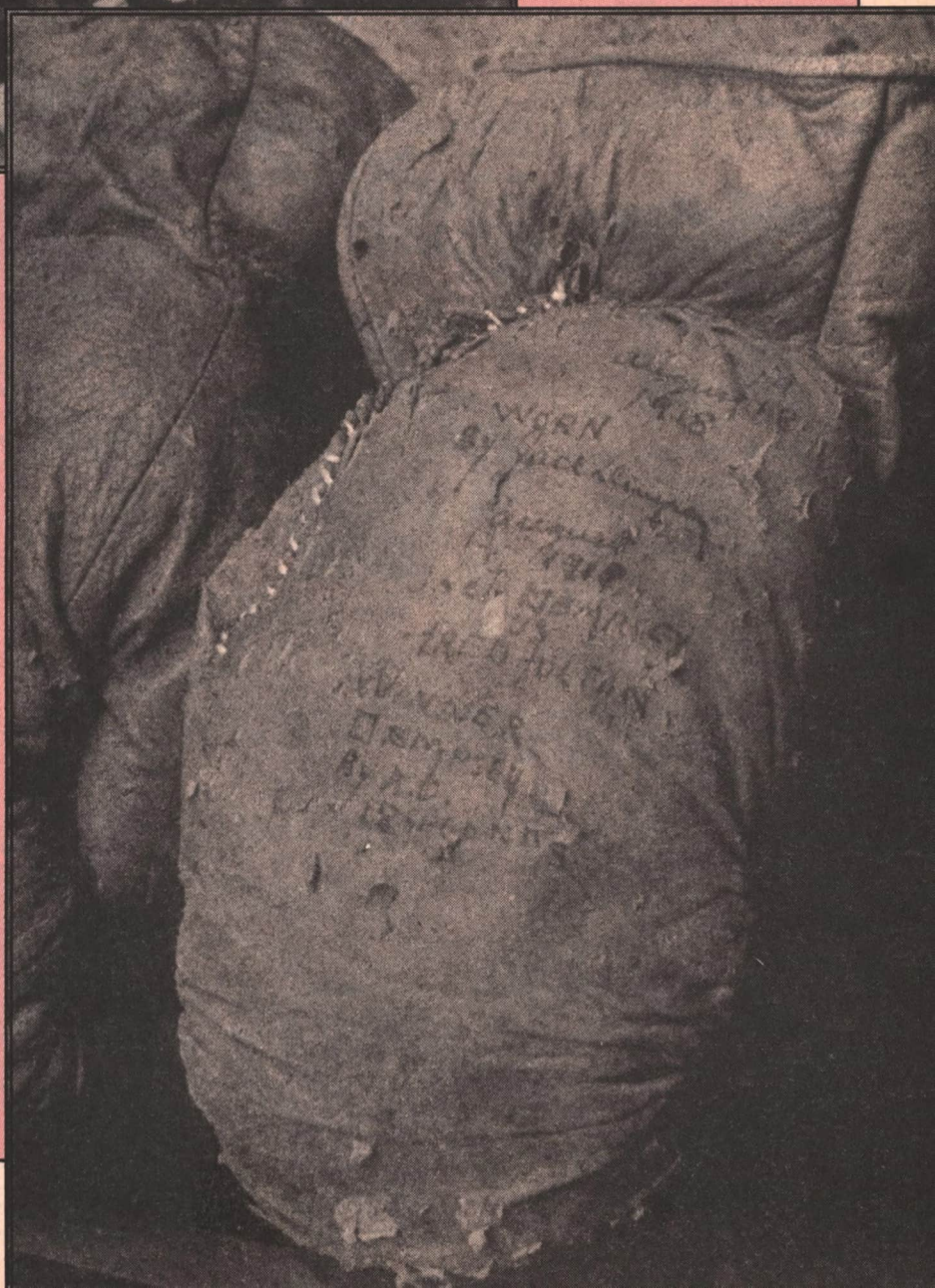
Dempsey's signature on the upper part of the left glove is unquestionably authentic. In my opinion, Jack's signature was the first inscription on that glove. All the other notations were added later. One can assume Dempsey may or may not have known he was signing the actual gloves he had used to crucify Fulton, or just some relics rescued from a hock shop. After all, this was a man asked for his autograph many, many times every day of his adult life. Jack signed his name hundreds of thousands of times on anything and everything shoved at him. For almost 50 years he made his living signing autographs as a professional host and greeter when his combat days were over. He would never have refused to scratch his handle, especially on the tools of his trade.

The most reasonable explanation of how those chewed-up remnants of battle could possibly have changed from squeaky new leather-wrapped horsehair in 18 seconds came from an old promoter-manager, Willie Gilzenberg, who for years promoted fights at Laurel Gardens in Newark, New Jersey, which is just down the road from Harrison, site of the Dempsey-Fulton massacre. Willie's answer: "They didn't."

Willie rationalized: "I saw that fight and I remember it like it was yesterday. What you gotta understand is what we did in those days. We couldn't afford to buy new gloves for every fight on the card. Eight to 10 fights. Some nights we used the same gloves for every fight. But most of the time we had two sets for a show. And don't forget, they weren't even always new to begin with. We had saved them from the show of the week before. And the week before that. And we



Right: These badly mangled gloves were photographed by the author in 1960 at the Helms Boxing Hall of Fame in Los Angeles. According to the shrine's curators, the gloves were used by Jack Dempsey to knock out gigantic Fred Fulton in just 18 seconds back in 1918. But the gloves raised more questions than they answered. Above: The historic knockout of Fulton, Dempsey's ninth first-round kayo of the year.



kept using them until a guy's fingers stuck out the other end. Believe me, when we finally tossed them into the garbage can, they didn't look like no boxing gloves."

Gilzenberg theorized the gloves he saw in that photograph may very well have been used by Dempsey against Fulton. But they also could have been used in as many as "40 or 50 other fights, by guys you never heard of."

Willie has been gone for many years. He was a lovable little imp of a fellow who spoke only in boxing's curious language. I chuckle at the fantasy of having asked him, "Willie, take a good look at this picture of Dempsey's gloves. Then tell me your opinion of their *provenance.*" I wonder how Willie would have reacted.

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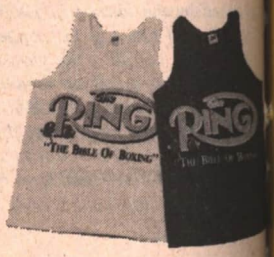

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THE FUTURE of MIKE TYSON

The Five Questions That Must Be Answered

By Nigel Collins

Years from now, sociologists will labor in vain to explain the vice-like grip with which Mike Tyson held the public's interest during the last couple of decades of the 20th century. They'll blather on and on about the age of the anti-hero, throw in a couple of references to gangsta rap, and camouflage their overall lack of comprehension with a plethora of technical jargon. Of course, the one thing they won't do is consult boxing fans.

Readers of THE RING have always understood the underlying truth behind Tyson's primordial appeal: He's the ultimate badass. Well, at least he used to be. Now, as Tyson's first major fight in almost five years approaches, we're no longer sure if he's still the baddest man on the planet. In fact, we're not even sure if he's even the baddest man in the division.

The reason for the uncertainty is as fundamental as a punch in the teeth: We haven't seen enough of him to know. Tyson has engaged in precisely 601 seconds of competitive action since being released from prison and resuming his boxing career. Just how well this has prepared him for his March 16 attempt to take the WBC heavyweight title away from Frank Bruno remains to be seen.

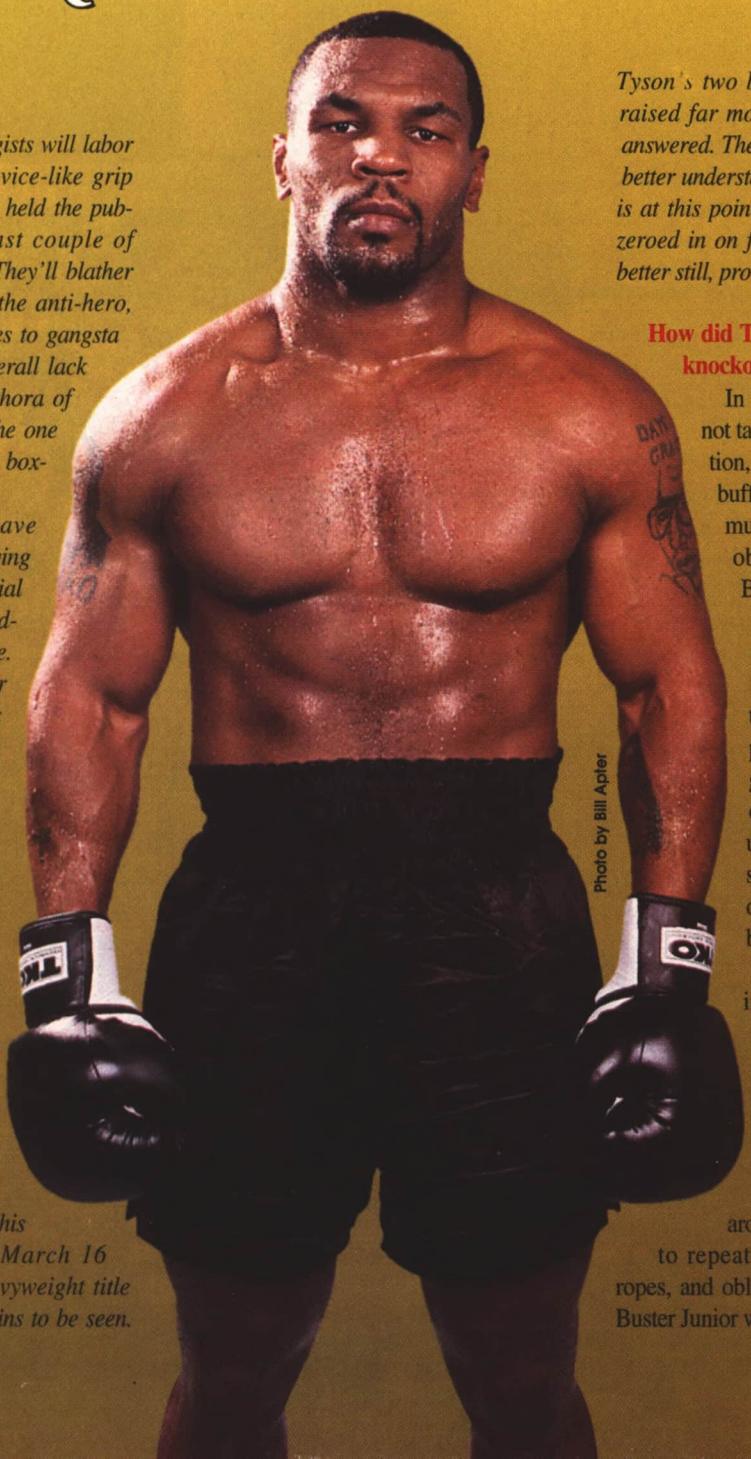


Photo by Bill Apter

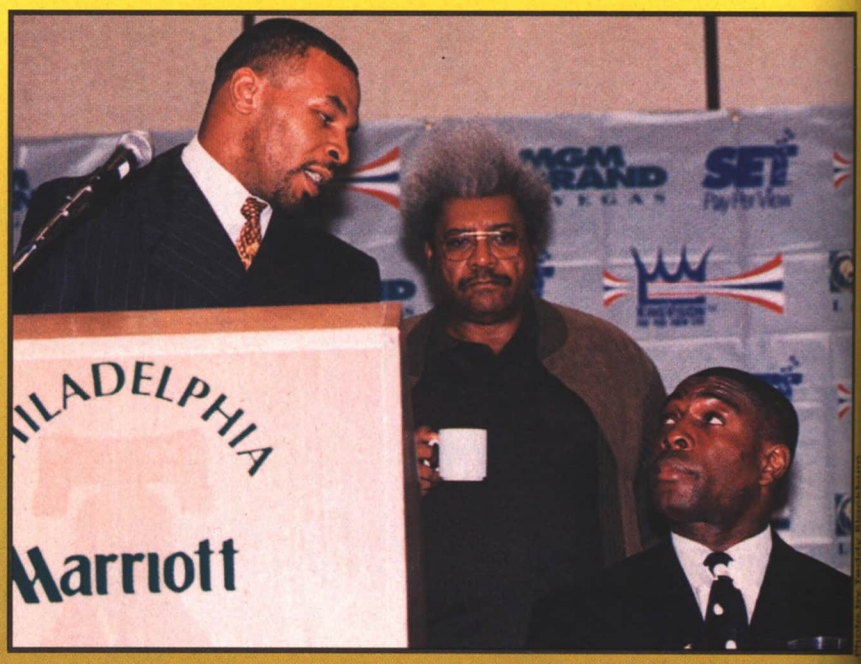
Tyson's two brief ring appearances have raised far more questions than they have answered. Therefore, in an attempt to gain a better understanding of exactly where Tyson is at this point in his career, THE RING has zeroed in on five pertinent questions—and, better still, provided the answers.

How did Tyson look in his third-round knockout of Buster Mathis Jr.?

In a word, unimpressive. We're not talking about his physical condition, mind you. Tyson was totally buffed, displaying Holyfieldesque muscle definition. The man had obviously been working hard. But what, besides polishing his physique, had Tyson been doing in the gym? He seemed to have no strategy other than trying to end matters with one punch, and didn't throw a single jab until the end of the second round. Instead, he loaded up and swung from the heels, sending wild hooks whizzing over the top of Mathis' bobbing head.

Tyson went about the fight in an almost offhand manner. Sure, every punch was thrown with bad intentions, but where was the fire-breathing intensity that used to fuel his attack? He spent an alarming amount of time just standing around, meekly allowing Mathis to repeatedly bulldoze him into the ropes, and obligingly embracing every time Buster Junior wanted to clinch.

"Iron Mike's" posturing aside, WBC heavyweight champion Frank Bruno was encouraged by what he saw in the Tyson-Mathis fight. The Englishman will defend against Tyson on March 16 in Las Vegas, seven years after their first fight.



Tyson's best move was a nifty side-shift that eventually positioned him to throw the three nuclear warheads that smacked into Mathis' head in the third round and ended the fight. Otherwise, he showed no inclination to set up his punches. Feints were nonexistent, and Mathis' abundant midsection was badly neglected.

The bottom line is that Tyson scored a third-round knockout. So why all the nitpicking? Well, Tyson has always been held to the highest standards. It's been that way ever since Cus D'Amato took him out of a reformatory and transformed him into one of the most destructive heavyweights of all-time.

BUSTER GOES BOOM

Boom! Pow! Crunch! And it was all over. The first right sent shock waves coursing through Buster Mathis Jr.'s brain, the second started him on his way to the canvas, and the third made sure he didn't get up. Mike Tyson, 43-1 (37), had notched his second win on the comeback trail. And if you saw only the brutal conclusion of the scheduled 12-rounder, you could be forgiven for thinking the old Tyson was back—all the way back. But you'd be wrong.

Until he connected with the rights that resulted in Mathis being counted out 2:32 into the third round, Tyson looked so rusty, you half-expected to see trainer Jay Bright reaching for the oil can between rounds. Tyson swung for the fences with practically every shot, fanning the already-chilly air inside the half-empty Spectrum with one massive miss after another.

The way Tyson fought was similar to the slapdash way Don King promoted the show. Originally scheduled for November 4, but postponed when Tyson fractured his thumb, the fight was shuttled from Las Vegas to Atlantic City, where the New Jersey Casino Control Commission refused to license King due to his indictment for wire fraud, to Philadelphia. The whole affair had a let's-just-get-it-over-with feel to it, and that's the way Tyson approached his task.

Mathis, game but badly outgunned, did the only thing he could to delay the inevitable—boring inside of Tyson's power zone and hanging on every time things got too hot for comfort. The surprising part was how accommodating Tyson was between his ill-aimed salvos. Even though the whole mess lasted less than three rounds, Tyson spent an inordinate amount of time with his back to the ropes, passively permitting himself to be pushed around by his rotund rival.

When Tyson, 219, Catskill, New York, finally found the range in the third, Mathis, 224, Grand Rapids, Michigan, went down hard. And even though he appeared to have beaten the rapid-fire count of referee Frank Cappuccino (USA), Mathis didn't complain.

"He just hit me with a good shot," said Mathis, 20-1 (6) with 1 no-decision and 1 no-contest. "I dodged a lot of his punches, but I didn't dodge that one. What can I do about it?"

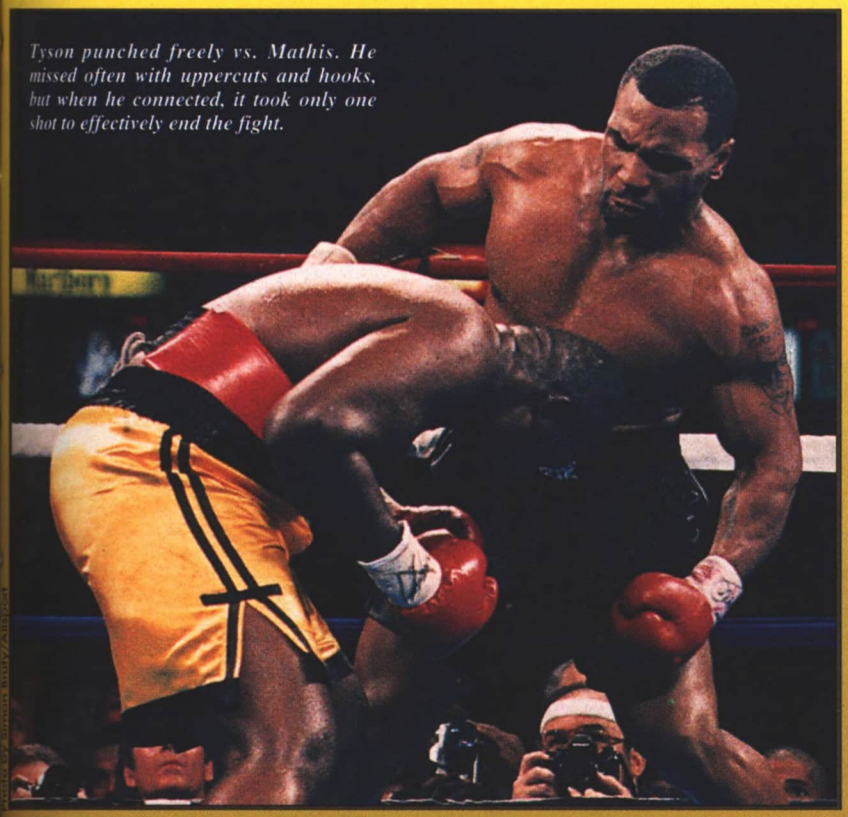
Not much. As Mathis' trainer, Joey Fariello (who died of a stroke 11 days after the fight), so succinctly put it, "Buster was throwing BBs, and Mike was throwing bombs."

The judges were Carol Polis, Ron Greenly, and Adailade Triplett, all from the USA.

The combination of casino ticket prices ($500 to $25) in a blue-collar town and a mismatch of a main event held the crowd down to about 6,200.

The big winners were Fox Television, which aired the fight live and drew a network-record 43 million viewers, and Tyson, who reportedly earned a $10-million purse. Mathis didn't do too badly either, returning home with $600,000, which works out to about $200,000 for every shot Tyson landed.

–NC



Tyson punched freely vs. Mathis. He missed often with uppercuts and hooks, but when he connected, it took only one shot to effectively end the fight.

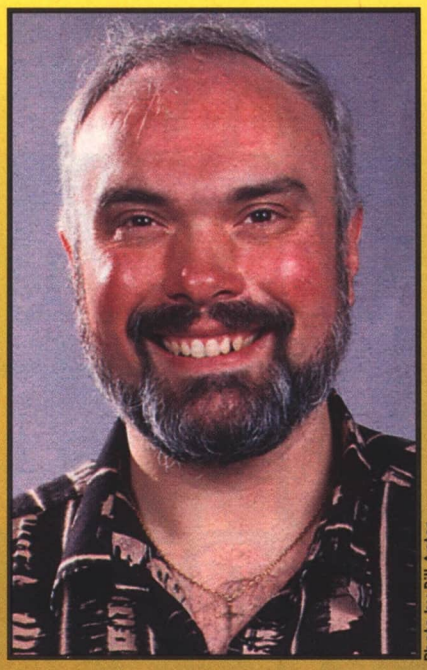


Photo by Bill Apter

Is Jay Bright up to the task of training the most valuable property in boxing? Bright says that in the gym, he stresses the principles of Cus D'Amato. Only Tyson's future ring performances will tell the boxing world if the inexperienced trainer is successful.

This is *Mike Tyson* for crying out loud! A lot is expected of him.

Does how Tyson looked against Mathis mean anything in the long run?

Those who are counting on Tyson to revitalize boxing had better hope not. If this is as good as it gets, both Tyson and the sport are in for a mighty big letdown. But let's not panic.

It is reasonable to assume Tyson knew the light-hitting, slow-moving Mathis posed no serious threat. Therefore, he probably had trouble getting up for the encounter. It's not too tough to understand. The Peter McNeeley fight was big because it was his first start since getting out of jail. The Bruno bout is important because it's the first step in regaining the undisputed title. The Mathis fight, on the other hand, was just another tuneup, a banal halfway-point between the absurdity of yesterday and the promise of tomorrow.

Still, the outing wasn't a total waste of time. Tyson undoubtedly shed some rust. Sparring is beneficial up to a point, but there's nothing like the real thing to sharpen the reflexes. At least it was better than McNeeley; nobody from Mathis' corner jumped into the ring.

There is also the matter of style. While admittedly ill-equipped to beat Tyson, Mathis went into the bout with a well-considered battle plan. He wanted to crowd Tyson and smother his attack by pushing and holding. Despite Tyson's compact build and ripping uppercuts, he is not a very effective infighter, and has always had trouble with maulers. Mitch "Blood" Green, Bonecrusher Smith, and Tony Tucker all managed to last the distance by applying bearhugs at every opportunity.

The good news for Tyson is that none of the three reigning world champions—Bruno (WBC), Bruce Seldon (WBA), and Frans Botha (IBF)—is any better at the dying art of infighting than he is. The bad news is that Riddick Bowe is one of the best infighters the division has seen since Joe Frazier.

Does Tyson need a different trainer?

It's easy to knock the current trainer, Jay Bright. Bright's credentials are even less impressive than Mathis' kayo percentage. In fact, Tyson is the *only* world-class fighter Bright has ever worked with in such a crucial capacity. But that doesn't make him a bad guy—or necessarily a bad trainer.

Bright was one of a group of young men who, in the early-'80s, gravitated to D'Amato's home in Catskill, New York. Bright was unlike other D'Amato proteges Teddy Atlas and Kevin Rooney in that boxing did not appear to be his main love. Bright wanted to be an actor. But after Tyson split with original co-manager Bill Cayton and fired Rooney, who had trained him throughout his pro career, Bright ascended to the top spot in the corner.

Much blame was heaped upon Bright following the dismal performances by both Tyson and his handlers in the Buster Douglas fight. So it came as somewhat of a shock when Bright was reinstated after Tyson was released from prison. But the decision conformed to Tyson's pattern of surrounding himself with people he's comfortable with. Current co-manager Rory Holloway, whom Tyson has known since his teen years, is another example of this phenomena. Tyson is at ease with Bright, and that, rather than technical expertise, is what seems to count most. Sure, somebody like Emanuel Steward or Eddie Futch would be capable of teaching Tyson a lot more than Bright can, but it's not going to happen.

At least Bright seems to have the right idea about what his fighter needs to do in order to reach his full potential. While

(Continued on page 56)

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

OSCAR DE LA HOYA

"My Image Changes In The Ring"

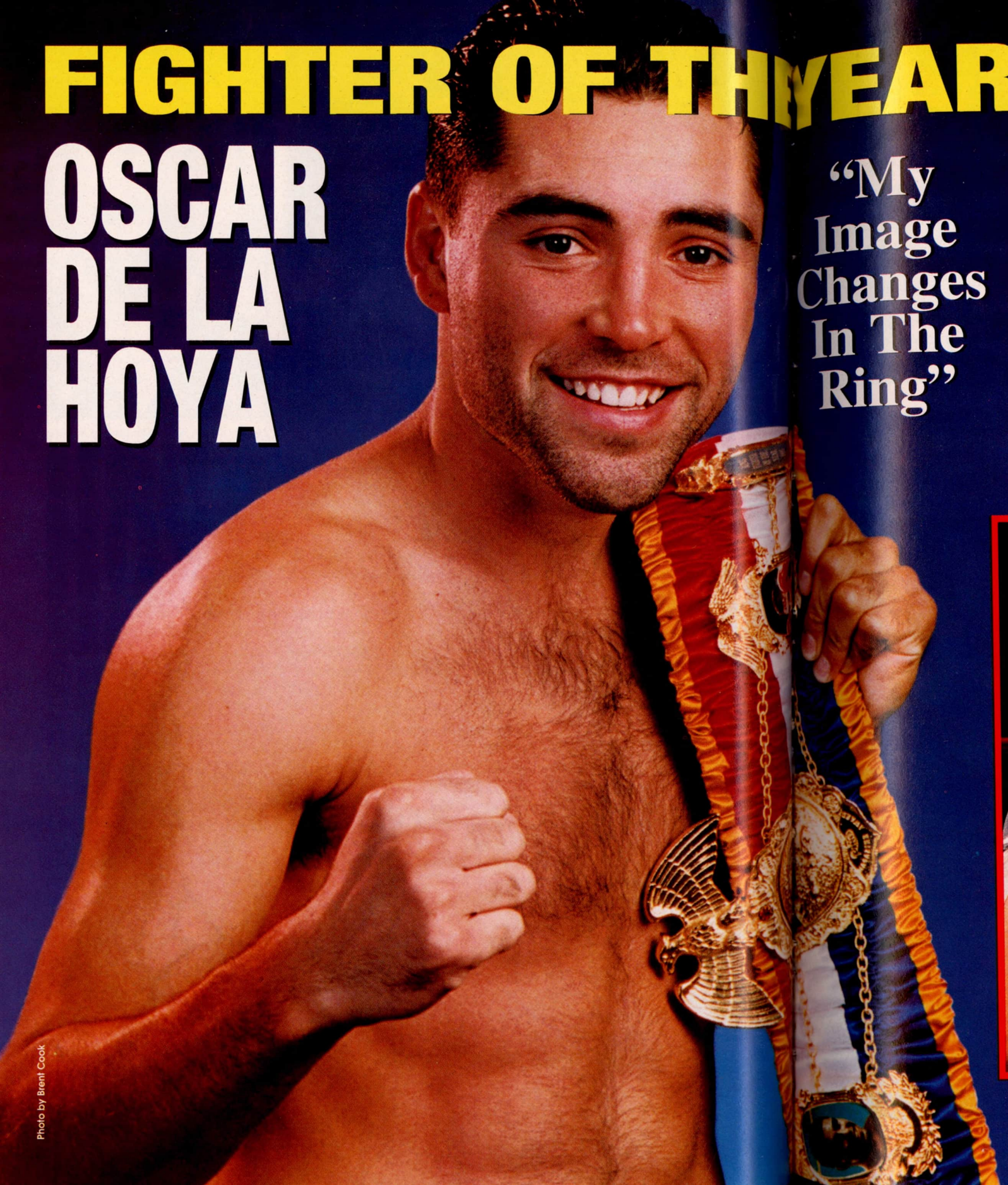


Photo by Brent Cook

By Steve Farhood

Just before the opening bell of Oscar De La Hoya's Madison Square Garden debut, one of his handlers fed him from a water bottle. Like a patient in a dentist's chair, De La Hoya swished and spit, leaving a line or two of drool at the corner of his mouth. He didn't bother to wipe it off.

These are the types of defining moments veteran boxing writers are paid to look for. Golden boys don't drool, you see, but fighters do. There were 16,027 fans at the Garden, and the hotshot from L.A. was definitely in a New York state of mind.

"My image changes in the ring," De La Hoya explained.

Though he'll never be Oscar the Grouch, there's a side of De La Hoya that hasn't yet surfaced. Look, then, for a day when the line of drool is followed by a flying elbow, a bloody nose, or maybe an intentional low blow.

"I think I'd really enjoy a brutal fight like that," he said. "Battered, bleeding … a really good show. A dangerous situation—there's a side of me that wants that kind of fight. A tiger? You'd see a *lion* in there."

Then, as if realizing he wasn't projecting the type of image that has landed him mainstream endorsements, he added, "But I believe I'll be considered a better champion if I *don't* have to fight like that."

De La Hoya fought a lot of different ways in 1995, and after he disposed of Jesse James Leija the easy way on December 15, he was not only the overwhelming choice as THE RING's Fighter of the Year, but the *only* choice. And perhaps the best thing about the superstar-in-the-making is that as bright as his recent past has been, his future is even brighter.

De La Hoya finished 1994 further whetting the appetites of those who had been trumpeting his potential. He kayoed a couple of tough lightweights in Carl

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

De La Hoya was far too powerful for James Leija in December; the first time "The Golden Boy" landed cleanly, the Texan dropped to the canvas and the fight was effectively over.

Griffith and John Avila, but wins 15 and 16 weren't really any more significant than numbers one through 14. Questions remained about his adaptability, his toughness, and especially his chin. One year later, the only questions concern the level of greatness he'll reach. We'll begin to learn the answer when he fights junior welterweight champion Julio Cesar Chavez later this year.

De La Hoya fought four times in '95, and while he was always favored, each of his opponents was a reigning world champion or former champion with far more experience. Just how big was the jump in class? De La Hoya's four victims, John-John Molina, Rafael Ruelas, Genaro Hernandez, and Leija, had engaged in a combined 27 world title fights. Among their opponents had been Tony Lopez, Freddie Pendleton, Jibaro Perez, Azumah Nelson, and Gabe Ruelas. In his two years as a pro, De La Hoya had faced the likes of Jimmi Bredahl, Narciso Valenzuela, and Giorgio Campanella.

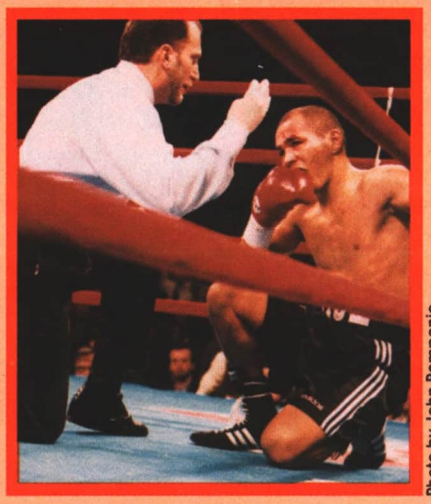


Photo by John Pomponio

Referee Ron Lipton tolls over a stunned Leija after the second knockdown. Leija beat the count, but his corner surrendered just after the bell ending the second round.

De La Hoya rated Hernandez the toughest of the four, followed by, in decreasing order, Molina, Leija, and Ruelas. Interestingly, Ruelas was the only full-fledged lightweight. In a devastating display of powerpunching, De La Hoya banished him in two rounds. Judging by Ruelas' next outing, an upset loss to George Scott, he still hasn't recovered.

While Hernandez' boxing skills proved troublesome until a left uppercut broke his nose and brought his surrender, Molina provided the sternest test. The Puerto

OSCAR DE LA HOYA:

In 1995, "The Golden Boy" became a man. And as unlikely as it may seem, Oscar De La Hoya's future is even brighter than his immediate past. In 1995, De La Hoya, having beaten four championship-caliber opponents in John-John Molina, Rafael Ruelas, Genaro Hernandez, and Jesse James Leija, was THE RING's overwhelming choice as Fighter of the Year. In 1996, he looks forward to conquering his third weight class (junior welterweight), and if everything falls right, he'll engage in the biggest fight of his career, a showdown with Julio Cesar Chavez in June.

W 12 John-John Molina, Las Vegas, Nevada, February 18, 1995: Superstar or super fraud? By signing for this battle, De La Hoya, 22, silences those who have dismissed him as a coddled Olympic hero. The 29-year-old Molina is a hardened veteran who, in his second reign as IBF junior lightweight champion, made seven defenses. In a sloppy, ugly fight, the Puerto Rican, 36-4 (26), survives a knockdown halfway through the first round, then butts, kidney-punches, and mauls De La Hoya the rest of the way. For The Golden Boy, it is a rude awakening, but De La Hoya does the effective punching—Molina lands only 30 percent of his blows—and punishes his foe with a variety of blows in an inspired last round.

De La Hoya emerges victorious by unanimous scores of 117-110 and 116-111 (twice).

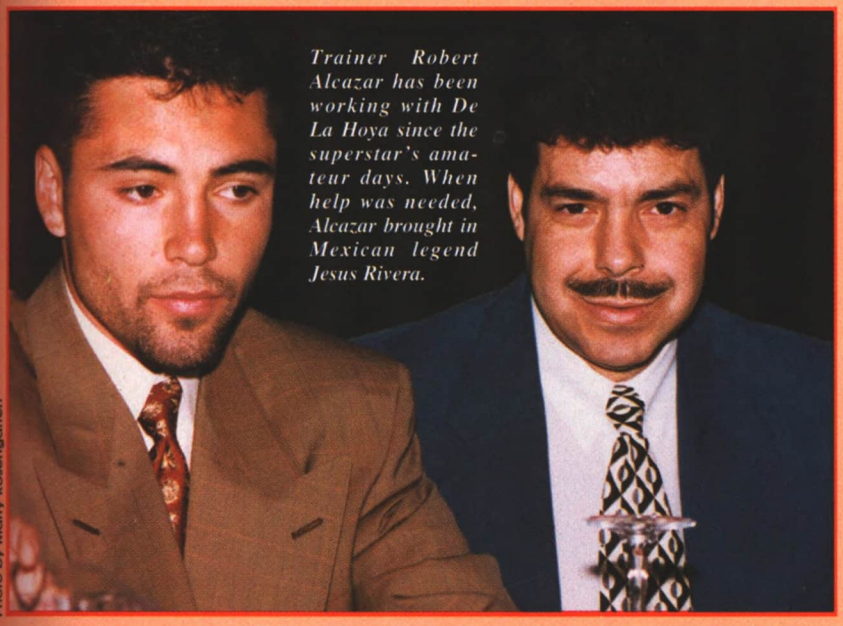
"I should have boxed more, but I had to become a warrior," he says.

KO 2 Rafael Ruelas, Las Vegas, Nevada, May 6, 1995:

De La Hoya had to be gritty vs. Molina

IBF lightweight champion Ruelas is everything Molina is not: He's a legitimate 135-pounder; at 5'11", he's taller than De La Hoya, and has a longer reach; and with 34 kayos in 43 wins, he's a dangerous puncher. As if this matchup needs further spice, there's a personal angle: De La Hoya and Ruelas fought as amateurs, and they sparred in 1992. Who got the better of it? That depends, of course, on who you ask.

This time, there are no smiles from De La Hoya as he enters the ring. And only a few minutes later, there are no smiles from Ruelas as he exits. With Ruelas walking in behind a high guard, De La Hoya quickly capitalizes on his opponent's poor balance. One minute into the second, The Golden Boy's signature hook drops Ruelas, 43-2 (34). A right produces a second knockdown,



Trainer Robert Alcazar has been working with De La Hoya since the superstar's amateur days. When help was needed, Alcazar brought in Mexican legend Jesus Rivera.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Rican fought like a Fritzie Zivic wannabe, crowding the taller De La Hoya, mauling and brawling, and making sure to foul along the way.

The bout was an education, with De La Hoya learning that he was anything but a polished pro. To his credit, he reached for help, summoning veteran Mexican trainer Jesus Rivera, who had worked with legendary flyweight champion Miguel Canto. And to the credit of Robert Alcazar, De La Hoya's longtime trainer, Rivera's arrival didn't cause a major clash of egos. In fact, it was Alcazar's idea to bring Rivera out of retirement.

"The old man teaches me moves," De La Hoya said of defensive specialist Rivera, "and up in the ring I feel invincible, unstoppable. He makes me feel confi-

THE YEAR THAT WAS

and when the fusillade continues, referee Richard Steele intervenes at the 1:43 mark.

"We knew it was a matter of time," says De La Hoya.

Less than five minutes, as it turned out.

KO 6 Genaro Hernandez, Las Vegas, Nevada, September 9, 1995: As Sugar Ray Leonard proved, a superstar chooses not only who he'll fight, but when he'll fight him. In 1992, certain overzealous insiders suggested De La Hoya make his pro debut in a title fight against East Los Angeles rival and WBA junior lightweight champion Hernandez. De La Hoya's management felt otherwise, and in fact, the unbeaten Hernandez was initially avoided even after The Golden Boy began facing world-class opposition.

But all fights have their time. Though not really a lightweight, the 5'11" Hernandez has experience, a dependable chin, and well-rounded skills. He chooses to box, and De La Hoya obliges. For six rounds they carefully trade jabs and combinations. De La Hoya has the biggest weapon—his left hook—and builds a points lead by limiting Hernandez' connect rate to an anemic 23 percent.

In the sixth, De La Hoya breaks through with three left uppercuts, one of which shatters Hernandez' nose. After the bell, the veteran, complaining of intense pain and breathing difficulties, informs referee Richard Steele of his surrender.

"You know what? I was barely warming up," says the winner.

KO 2 Jesse James Leija, New York City, December 15, 1995: The Golden Boy is the headliner, but the building is the

As Ruelas learned, "The Golden Boy" isn't a one-armed fighter

star. In a bout billed as "The Return To Mecca," De La Hoya makes his East Coast debut before a near-sellout crowd of 16,027 at Madison Square Garden. It is the first boxing show at the Garden in almost three years, and Leija gets steamrolled like a tourist gingerly attempting to board a Big Apple subway car during rush hour.

De La Hoya circles in the first round, then explodes with a left hook in the second that sends Leija sprawling. A second knockdown follows, and as Leija returns to his corner at the bell, trainer Richie Giachetti surrenders. Even a minute's rest, he realizes, isn't going to help.

"He has a lot of power," Leija says of De La Hoya. "He should be a middleweight."

THE RING'S FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Oscar De La Hoya is the 70th recipient of THE RING's Fighter of the Year award. A complete listing:

1928: Gene Tunney
1929: Tommy Loughran
1930: Max Schmeling
1931: Tommy Loughran
1932: Jack Sharkey
1933: No Award
1934: Tony Canzoneri/Barney Ross
1935: Barney Ross
1936: Joe Louis
1937: Henry Armstrong
1938: Joe Louis
1939: Joe Louis
1940: Billy Conn
1941: Joe Louis
1942: Ray Robinson
1943: Fred Apostoli
1944: Beau Jack
1945: Willie Pep
1946: Tony Zale
1947: Gus Lesnevich
1948: Ike Williams
1949: Ezzard Charles
1950: Ezzard Charles
1951: Ray Robinson
1952: Rocky Marciano
1953: Bobo Olson
1954: Rocky Marciano
1955: Rocky Marciano
1956: Floyd Patterson
1957: Carmen Basilio
1958: Ingemar Johansson
1959: Ingemar Johansson
1960: Floyd Patterson
1961: Joe Brown
1962: Dick Tiger
1963: Cassius Clay
1964: Emile Griffith
1965: Dick Tiger
1966: No Award
1967: Joe Frazier
1968: Nino Benvenuti
1969: Jose Napoles
1970: Joe Frazier
1971: Joe Frazier
1972: Muhammad Ali/Carlos Monzon
1973: George Foreman
1974: Muhammad Ali
1975: Muhammad Ali
1976: George Foreman
1977: Carlos Zarate
1978: Muhammad Ali
1979: Ray Leonard
1980: Thomas Hearns
1981: Ray Leonard/Salvador Sanchez
1982: Larry Holmes
1983: Marvin Hagler
1984: Thomas Hearns
1985: Marvin Hagler/Donald Curry
1986: Mike Tyson
1987: Evander Holyfield
1988: Mike Tyson
1989: Pernell Whitaker
1990: Julio Cesar Chavez
1991: James Toney
1992: Riddick Bowe
1993: Michael Carbajal
1994: Roy Jones
1995: Oscar De La Hoya

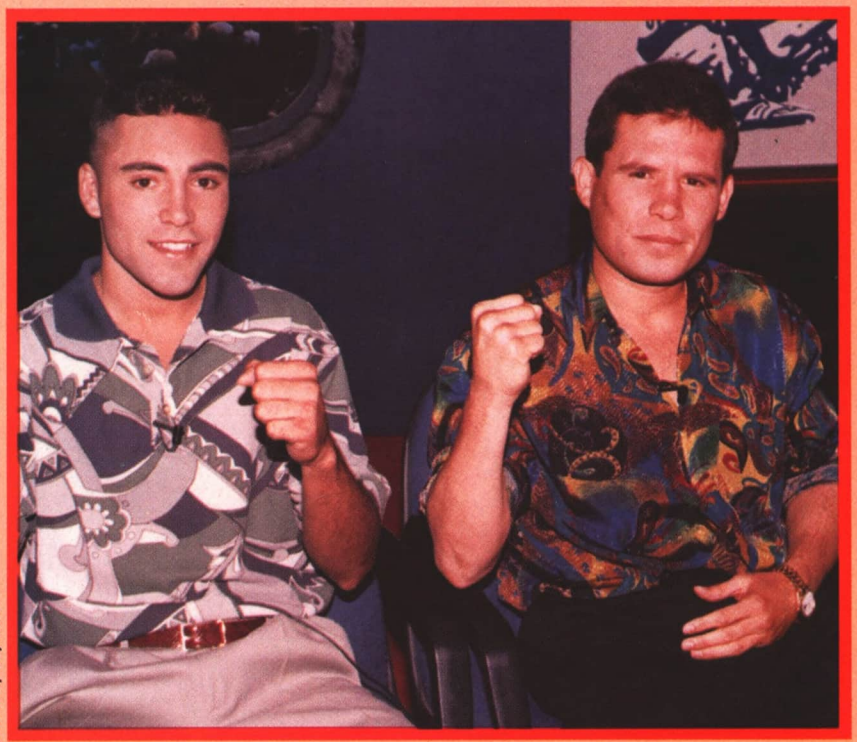


Photo by Jay Lash

De La Hoya and Julio Cesar Chavez seem friendly in this photo, taken in 1994. In June they'll make fists with bad intentions in the year's most anticipated bout.

dent. He's always telling me, 'Chavez—no problem. Four or five rounds.' Sometimes I imagine hitting Chavez right and him not getting up."

Sometimes we do, too.

***

Draw whatever conclusions you wish from the fact that De La Hoya-Leija drew about 10,000 more fans than Mike Tyson-Buster Mathis Jr., fought at the CoreStates Spectrum in Philadelphia one night later. *(See story and sidebar on page 35.)* We'll offer these: De La Hoya-Leija was the first fight at the Garden in almost three years; New York fans were excited by The Golden Boy's first East Coast appearance; tickets were reasonably priced for a pre-Christmas show; and the promotion, run by Top Rank, was first-class all the way.

Leija is closer to a featherweight than a lightweight, but for a big payday ($350,000), he was willing to try a much bigger opponent. He knew his only chance was to move close enough to launch a

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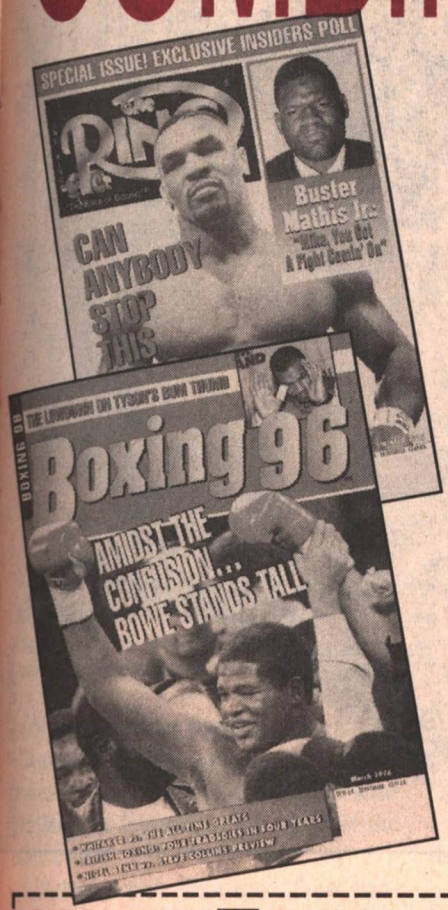

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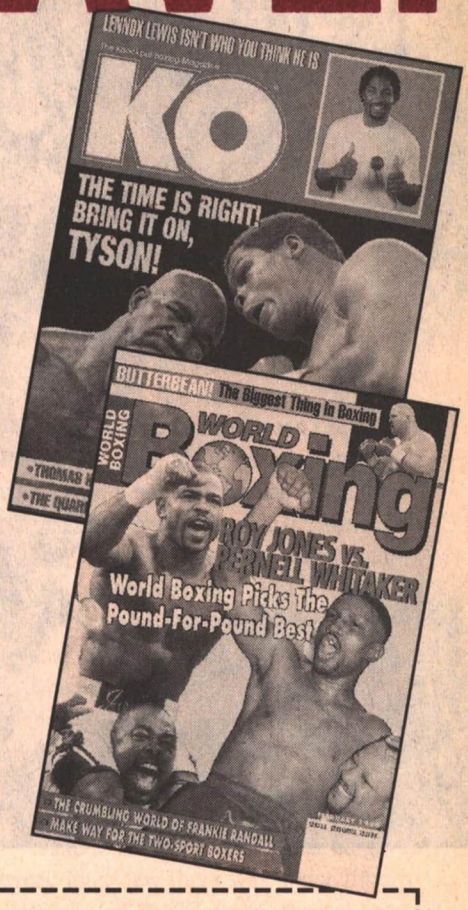

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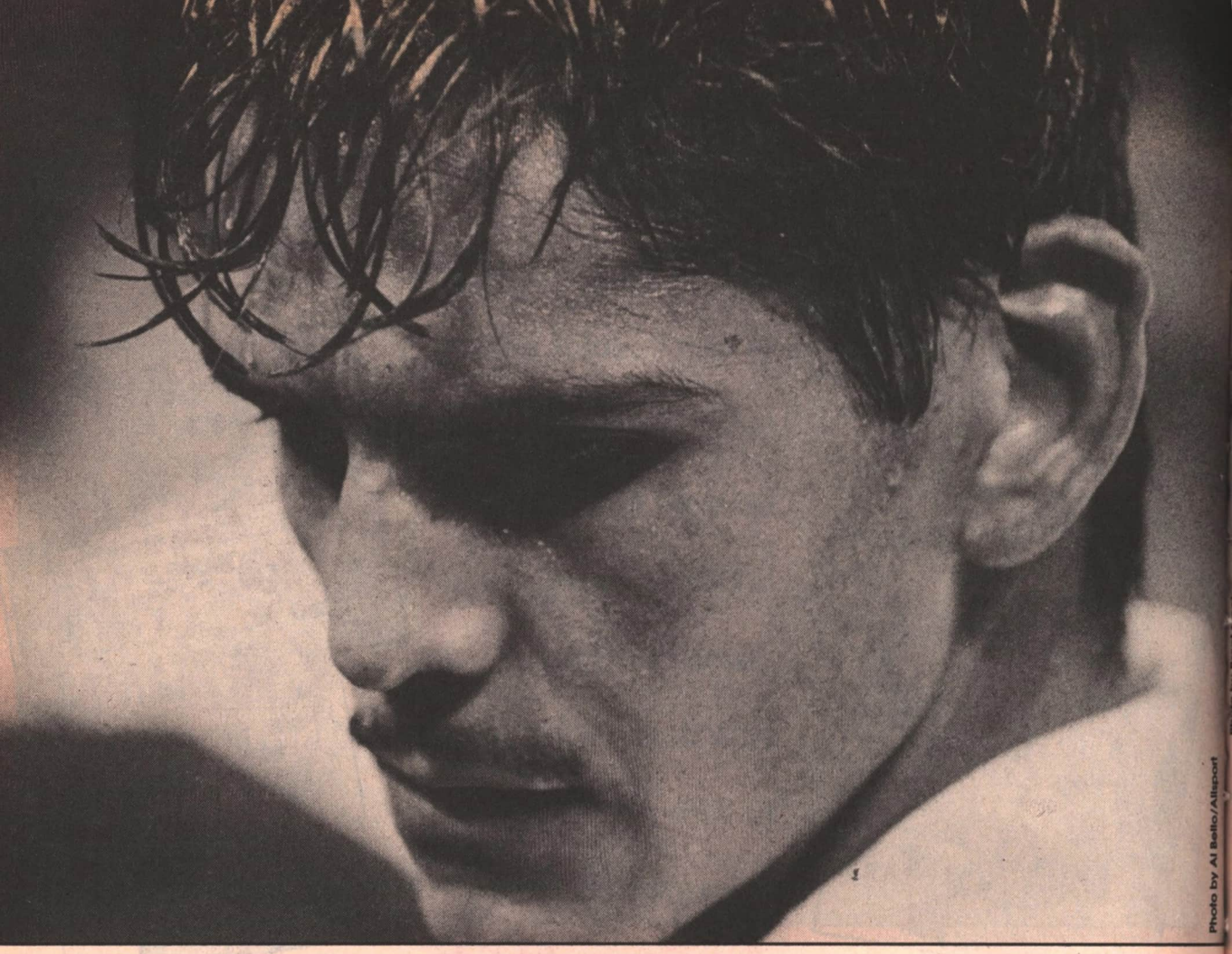

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

As Emile Griffith And Ray Mancini Know

GABE RUELAS' PAIN WILL NEVER GO AWAY

By Robert Cassidy

When a fighter climbs those three wooden steps and enters the ring of combat, his feelings are left behind. A boxer isn't supposed to feel. He's supposed to fight. And to fight well, he must shut out his feelings.

There is not a world-class fighter alive who goes into the ring thinking he's going to lose, much less suffer a serious injury. He cannot entertain such a thought. The moment the bell rings, he cannot have sympathy for his opponent or doubts about what he has to do to him. To succeed, he must convince himself of his own invincibility.

As the WBC super featherweight champion of the world, Gabriel Ruelas convinced himself. He was touted as a future champion early in his career, and he fought to achieve that end. He fought to win. It is not likely that he ever considered the consequences—until May 6, 1995. It can be assumed he contemplated his own

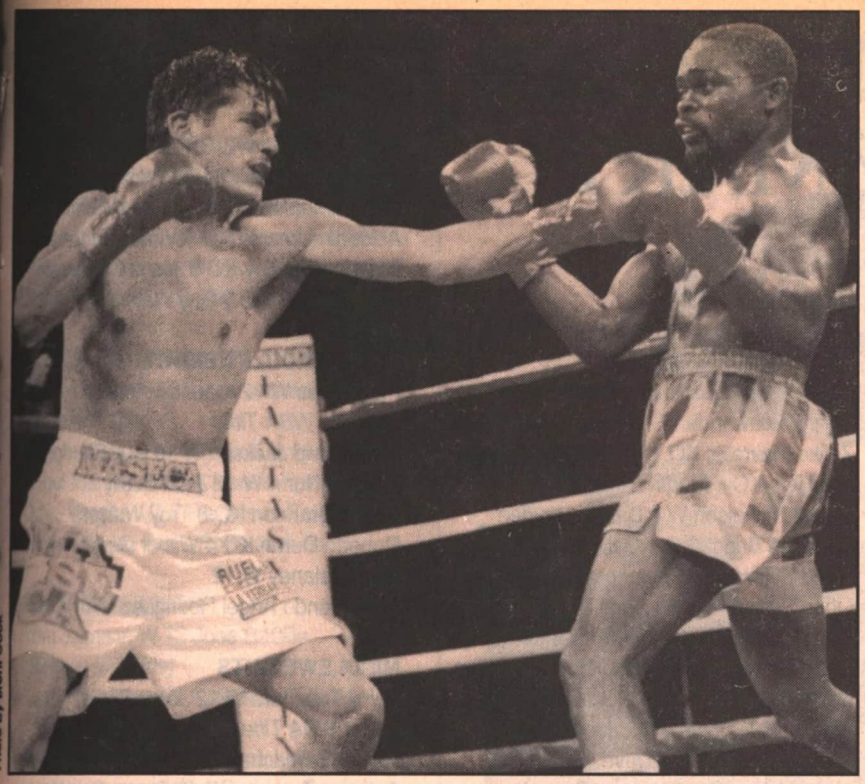

Photo by Brent Cook

Ruelas was wild, if not amateurish, during his junior lightweight title defense against Azumah Nelson. Ripe for the challenger's counterpunching, Ruelas fell in five rounds.

peril each time he accepted a fight. He always managed, however, to erase all doubts with his fists and his will. But what did his fists represent to the man in the other corner?

Perhaps for the first time, those concerns surfaced for Ruelas that evening in May, when his opponent, 23-year-old Colombian Jimmy Garcia, collapsed in his corner moments after their one-sided title fight had been stopped in the 11th round. Garcia lapsed into a coma and died 13 days later.

In the days that followed, it was clear Ruelas' life had changed forever. Garcia is gone, and he may have taken with him Ruelas' ability to fight. He introduced Ruelas to the cruel consequences of fighting to win, and by doing so, he may have stripped him of his cloak of invincibility.

Ruelas is no longer the champion of the world. In his first fight following the Garcia tragedy, he carried his feelings into the ring. He could not conquer 37-year-old Azumah Nelson—or was it the ghost of Jimmy Garcia? It was Nelson standing in front of him, all right, but Ruelas said he saw Garcia.

Ruelas could not will Garcia from his mind the way he could will victory from defeat. His postfight statements crystallized his state of mind: "My heart wasn't in the fight ... I don't know what happened ... At times I felt like I was fighting Jimmy. I saw the person I wasn't fighting. I never felt right. My mind was just somewhere else. It bothered me and I paid for it ... Once the bell rang, I just lost it out there ... It's not an excuse, but my mind was just somewhere else."

Ruelas has stopped talking about Garcia. To honor the fighter's memory, he had initially agreed to every interview, even when Colombian journalists called at all hours of the night. After the loss to Nelson, and as THE RING went to press, Ruelas felt it was time to stop talking.

"One of the problems is that he gave every interview there was about Jimmy Garcia," said Dan Goossen, Ruelas' man-

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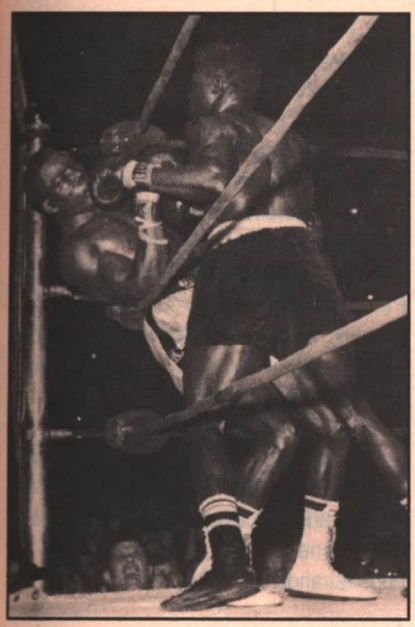

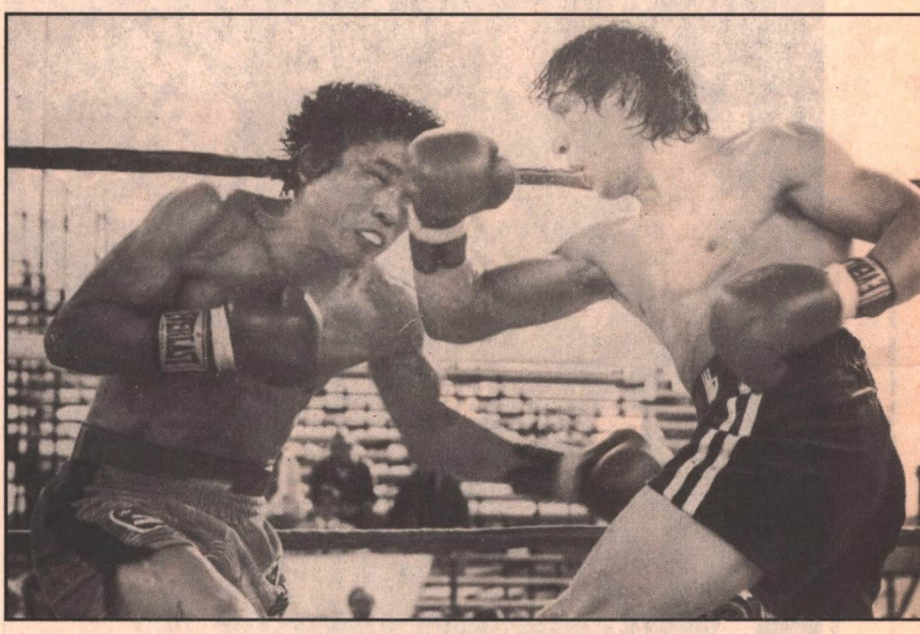

Two fights that will never be forgotten. Emile Griffith pummels Benny Paret along the ropes at Madison Square Garden in March 1962 (left). Paret died 10 days after the bout. Duk Koo Kim trades with Ray Mancini in Las Vegas in November 1982 (right). Kim died five days later.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Frans Botha W 12 Axel Schulz
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Mike Tyson KO 3 Buster Mathis Jr.
Henry Akinwande W 10 Tony Tucker
Zeljko Mavrovic KO 1 Przemyslaw Saleta
Joe Hipp KO 1 Martin Jaques
Danell Nicholson W 8 Darren Hayden
Shannon Briggs KO 1 Calvin Jones
Obed Sullivan W 10 Marion Wilson
Obed Sullivan KO 3 Kenny Smith
Darroll Wilson W 10 James Stanton
Peter McNeeley KO 1 Dr. Hackie Reitman
Keith McKnight KO 1 J.B. Williamson
Adilson Rodrigues W 12 Johnny Nelson
Michael Dokes KO 3 Dave Slaughter
Jorge Valdes KO 1 Marcos Gonzalez
Jose Ribalta KO 1 Bruce Johnson
Tyrone Booze KO 3 Earl Talley
Mitchell Rose KO 2 Butterbean
Alonzo Highsmith KO 2 Joe Wiggins

CRUISERWEIGHTS
James Toney KO 2 Greg Everett
Ralf Rocchigiani KO 8 Dan Ward

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Montell Griffin KO 6 Ray Webb
Ole Klemetsen KO 2 Julio Abel Gonzalez
Asluddin Umarov KO 9 Vinson Durham
Crawford Ashley KO 3 Jesus Castaneda
Troy Weaver KO 1 Guy Waters

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Frank Liles W 12 Mauricio Amaral
(Retains WBA Title)
John David Jackson W 10 Guy Stanford
Michael Nunn W 12 John Scully
Bryant Brannon KO 8 Troy Watson
Roberto Duran KO 4 Wilbur Garst
Mark Delaney W 12
Armando Angel Rodriguez

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Shinji Takehara W 12 Jorge Castro
(Wins WBA Title)
Hector Camacho KO 6 Lonnie Horn
Anthony Andrews W 10 Danny Garcia
Alex Hilton W 10 Alain Bonnamie

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Terry Norris W 12 Paul Vaden
(Wins IBF Title; Retains WBC Title)
Julio Cesar Vasquez KO 11 Carl Daniels
(Regains WBA Title)
Keith Holmes W 6 Kevin Tillman
Steve Foster W 12 Bahri Ahmeti
Oscar Gonzalez W 10 Greg Haugen

WELTERWEIGHTS
Yori Boy Campas KO 8 Javier Altimirano
Oba Carr KO 3 Ramon Sanchez
Oba Carr W 8 Lester Yarbrough
Freddy Ladd W 10 Marvin Williams
Bolillo Gonzalez KO 7 Luis Jose Verdugo
Rodney Moore KO 1 Robert Hightower
Kip Diggs W 10 Eric Mitchell
Alfred Ankamah W 10 Juan Carlos Barreto
Patrick Charpentier KO 1 Javier Martinez
Hiroyuki Yoshino W 12 Bong Kwan Park

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Sammy Fuentes KO 4
Marco Antonio Lizarraga
Jan Bergman KO 5 William Ruiz
Paul Ryan KO 1 Ross Hale
Raul Hernandez KO 10 Leonardo Mas
Lupe Miranda KO 4 Roberto Granciosa

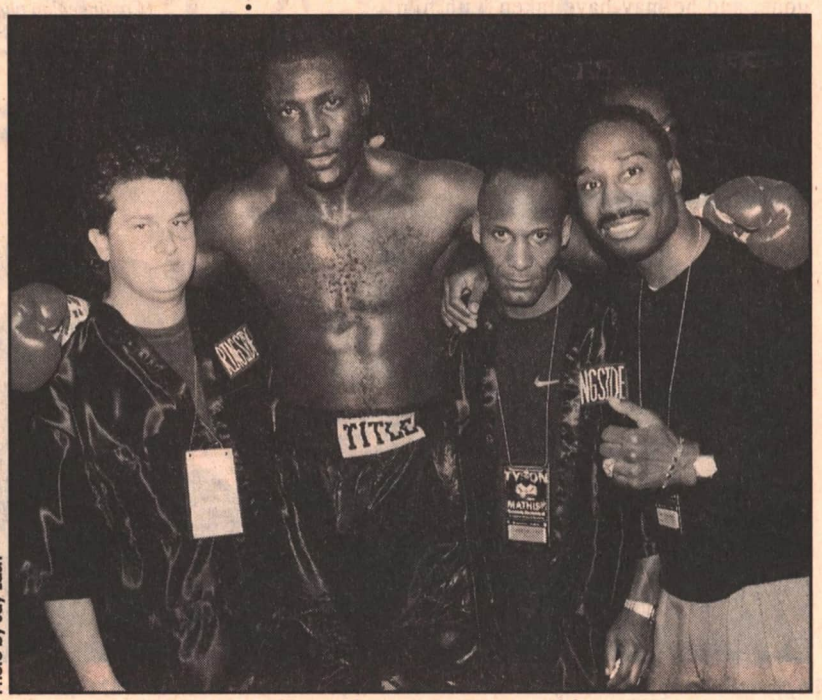

Photo by Joy Lash

Henry Akinwande won in his American debut

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Oscar De La Hoya KO 2 Jesse James Leija
Tonito Rivera KO 9 Gerald Gray
Cesar Perez Bazan KO 6 Ramon Marchena
Hiroyuki Sakamoto W 10 Jeff Mayweather
David Tetteh KO 12 Billy Schwer

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Arturo Gatti W 12 Tracy Patterson
(Wins IBF Title)
Reggie Tuur W 12 Giorgio Campanella
Angel Manfredy KO 6 Harold Petty
Goyo Vargas KO 2 Francisco Barajas
Jesus Chavez W 10 Roberto Avila

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Tom Johnson W 12 Jose Badillo
(Retains IBF Title)
Luisito Espinosa W 12 Manuel Medina
(Wins WBC Title)
Wilfredo Vasquez KO 3 Jose Luis Velasquez
Hector Lizarraga KO 4 Rodrigo Cerda
Richard DeJesus W 10 Tony Green
Agapito Sanchez KO 10 Jorge Monzon
Jonjo Irwin KO 8 Elvis Parsley

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Erik Morales W 12 Enrique Angeles
Al Kotey W 12 Freddy Cruz
Enrique Sanchez KO 9 Juan Luis Torres
Rafael Del Valle KO 6 Nelson Medina
Jesse Magana KO 6 Robinson Cuesta

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi KO 8 Geronimo Salazar
Paulie Ayala KO 3 Jose Rangel
Johnny Armour KO 5 Redha Jean Abbas
Cuauhtemoc Gomez W 12 Ricardo Medina
Tim Austin KO 1 Jose Luis Velarde
Sergio Millan KO 8 Armando Castro

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Alimi Goitia KO 5 Aquiles Guzman
(Retains WBA Title)
Enrique Orozco W 10 Luis Enrique Adame

FLYWEIGHTS
Mark Johnson KO 3 Raul Rios
Robbie Regan KO 2 Ferid Ben Jeddou
Alex Mahmutov W 10 Saotong Burengong

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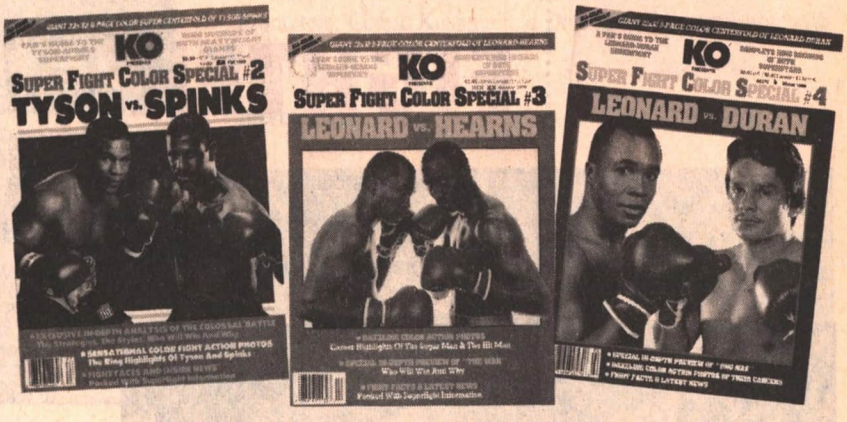

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Nelson has been a dominant champion at two weights. He's beaten Wilfredo Gomez, Jeff Fenech, and four other world champions, and he's all but guaranteed himself induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. But for one reason or another, "The Professor" remains underpublicized, underrated, and largely underappreciated.

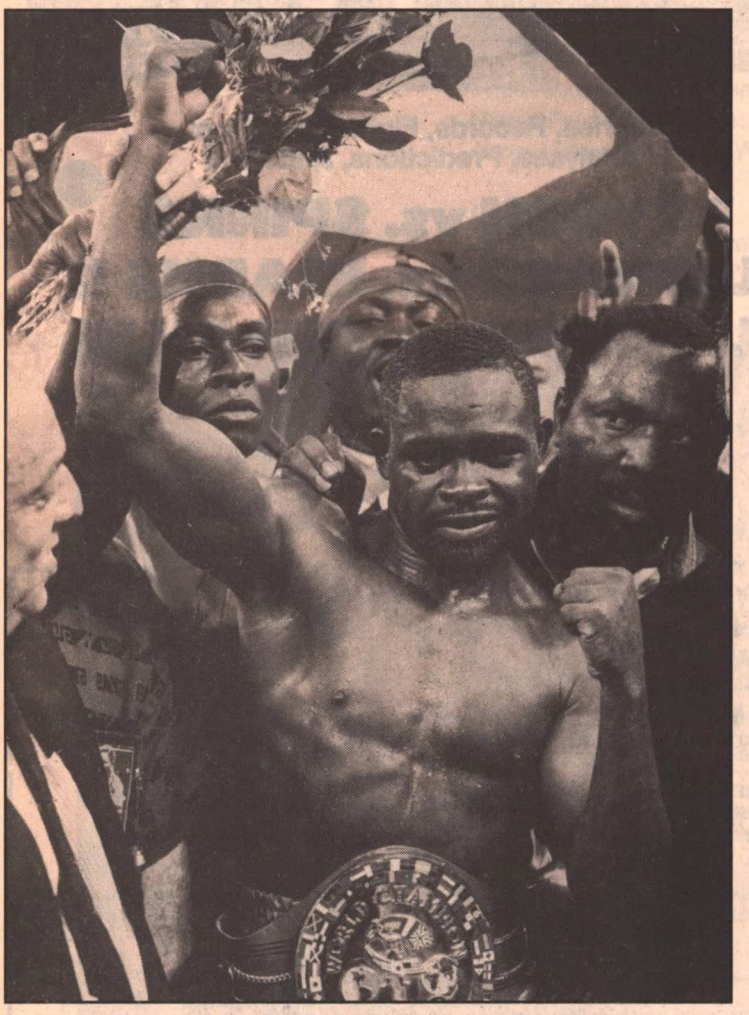


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

It wasn't any different after Nelson regained the WBC super featherweight title by crushing Gabe Ruelas. The postfight storyline concerned Ruelas and the ghost of Jimmy Garcia. Nelson was a mere afterthought.

Nelson is 37, and there's a good chance he'll never win another major fight. Then again, those who keep betting against him are the same people who refuse to reward him with his just due.

• • • •

Azumah Nelson

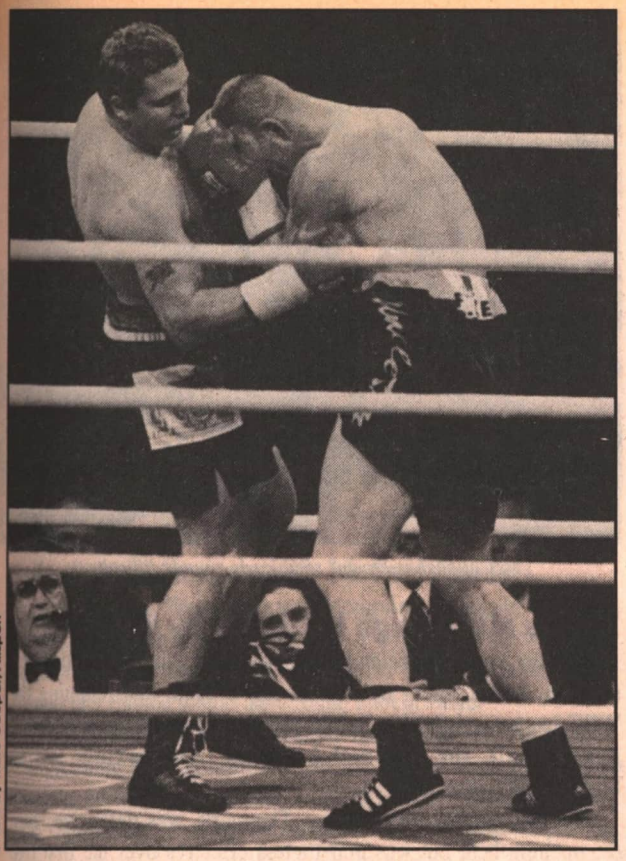


Photo by Mike Cooper/Allsport

Botha's weapon of choice was a right to the body

Frans Botha W 12 Axel Schulz

Stuttgart, Germany: A farcical heavyweight title fight, in which neither combatant displayed anything approaching championship quality, ended with bottles, glasses, and beer cans being hurled into the ring at Hans Martin Schleyer Hall after Botha was controversially declared the IBF titleholder by split decision. The title had been vacant since George Foreman's refusal to defend against Schulz following a disputed verdict over the German last April.

Once more, the 27-year-old Schulz, 212, Bad Saarow, Germany, appeared harshly treated by the judges, who, like most ringside observers, must have found the bout extremely difficult to score. So many shots were missed or blocked or just completely ineffectual that no clear advantage was gained by either fighter. However, the more productive work was done by Schulz after a circumspect start, and he carried the majority of the later rounds. But his reluctance to abandon a cautious style left room for doubt and allowed Botha, 226, Peoria, South Africa, to steal rounds on superior work rate and little else.

Over the opening three rounds, the inadequacies of both men were painfully highlighted, as not a single significant punch found the target. The 27-year-old Botha, 36-0 (21), was busier, particularly when applying a steady body attack, but his punches would barely have made a lightweight grimace. In the fourth, Schulz, 21-3-1 (10), found his range with a right and then a hook, while all of Botha's retaliatory shots fell short. Schulz landed another right in the sixth. It did not shake Botha, but gave the German the initiative.

From the seventh round, "The White Buffalo" began to move like one as fatigue increasingly set in. He missed wildly as Schulz became slightly more adventurous, firing three or four shots at a time. A right-left-right from Schulz at the end of the eighth excited the capacity crowd and increased expectations that Germany would have its first heavyweight champion since Max Schmeling.

Another right forced Botha to hold on in round 10. The South African, however, did just enough to take the final two rounds. It did not seem enough, however, to take the title.

Eugene Grant (USA) scored 115-113 for Schulz, but Harry Davis (Canada) and Al DeVito (USA) saw it for Botha by 116-112 and an extraordinary 118-111, respectively. THE RING had Schulz in front by 116-114. The referee was Rudy Battle (USA).

"The White Buffalo did just what he was supposed to do—he roamed," said Botha's promoter, Don King. And that, we suppose, said it all.

Promoters: Cedric Kushner and Don King, in association with RTL

(12-9-95)

Brian Doogan

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

Johnson cut Badillo, but couldn't cut him down

Tom Johnson W 12 Jose Badillo

Stuttgart, Germany: In a torrid encounter fought on the Botha-Schulz undercard, "Boom Boom" Johnson survived two knockdowns and a resolute challenge by the inexperienced Badillo to cling on to the IBF featherweight title by majority decision at Hans Martin Schleyer Hall. It was Johnson's eighth defense.

Displaying all the class and guile that has marked him as boxing's outstanding 126-pounder, Johnson, 126, Detroit, Michigan, amassed a sizable points lead by the halfway point. In his first real test as a pro, the 25-year-old Badillo, 126, Puerto Rico, was by no means overawed, however, and constantly threatened the champion. In the ninth, Johnson suddenly hit the wall after getting thumbed in the left eye. He sustained a fractured orbital bone, and his equilibrium, as well as the supply of oxygen to his brain, was affected. He becoming so tired that he had to rely on his experience just to remain upright.

Two rounds later, Badillo was on the verge of a shocking stoppage victory, but Johnson pulled through the crisis and negotiated the final round as the challenger inexplicably failed to sustain the pressure.

A left hook staggered Badillo in the second, and as the champion attempted to finish matters in the third, Badillo stood his ground and slugged it out, gaining Johnson's respect, but also enduring a bad cut over his left eye in round five which would require 12 stitches.

Undeterred, Badillo, 17-1 (14), began to take the initiative in rounds seven and eight before Johnson's sudden deterioration in the ninth. The challenger continued to apply pressure into the 11th, and a series of combinations culminating in a right put the 31-year-old Johnson, 41-2-1 (23), down half-a-minute into the round. With characteristic grit, Johnson fought back, but was again knocked to the canvas and looked in serious trouble. Referee Bobby Ferrara (USA) considered intervening, but the exhausted and beleaguered champion, who never before had been floored as a pro, made it to the bell. All three judges scored it a 10-7 round.

Despite Johnson's clearly distressed state, Badillo coasted the final three minutes, and Johnson carried the round. Al DeVito (USA) scored 113-113, while Bernie Cormier (Canada) and Heinrich Muhmert (Germany) had it 115-111 and 114-112, respectively, for Johnson. After being won over by the unknown challenger's spirited effort, the crowd jeered the verdict. THE RING had Johnson ahead by 115-113.

Upon returning home, Johnson underwent surgery to repair the facial damage he had incurred. He anticipates a return to action by February or March.

Promoters: Cedric Kushner and Don King, in association with RTL

(12-9-95)

Brian Doogan

Frankie Liles W 12 Mauricio Amaral

Stuttgart, Germany: While never really moving into top gear, Liles retained the WBA super middleweight title by clearly defeating the awkward Amaral by unanimous decision at Hans Martin Schleyer Hall. The bout, fought on the undercard of Botha-Schulz, was Liles' third defense.

Liles, 168, North Hollywood, California, barely had to break a sweat against a predictable Amaral, 168, Sao Paulo, Brazil. The challenger rarely took the initiative and never really threatened Liles' hold on the title. Utilizing his accurate and persistent southpaw jab, Liles kept Amaral at arm's length throughout and caught him frequently enough to coast through the late rounds. But he punctuated a consummate display by flooring Amaral with a left 10 seconds before the final bell.

As demonstrated against Chris Eubank last year, Amaral is a strong and durable fighter who lacks the ability to adapt. He did enjoy some success in the middle rounds, as Liles, 28-1 (17), took a mid-fight sabbatical. A right to the body hurt the champion in the sixth, and Amaral, 23-3-1 (19), caught him further with shots in the seventh. But Liles regained full control in the ninth.

Samuel Conde (Puerto Rico) and Enzo Montero (Venezuela) scored 118-110 and Pinit Prayadsab (Thailand) 120-108.

The referee was Hubert Earle (Canada).

Promoters: Cedric Kushner and Don King, in association with RTL

(12-9-95)

Brian Doogan

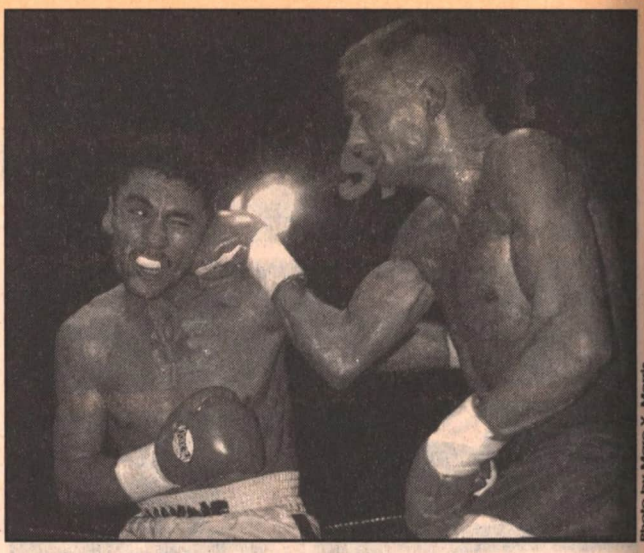


Photo by Marc V. Morris

McCullough overcame some early-rounds difficulty

Wayne McCullough KO 8 Johnny Bredahl

Belfast, Northern Ireland: Local hero McCullough made a triumphant homecoming by outclassing Bredahl and retaining the WBC bantamweight title before an electrically charged crowd at King's Hall, the spiritual home of Irish boxing. It was McCullough's first defense.

Bredahl, 116¾, Copenhagen, Denmark, was defensive from the opening bell, but was nonetheless effective over the first two rounds, scoring with straight shots and quickly moving out of range. The 25-year-old McCullough, 117½, Las Vegas via Belfast, started slowly. By the middle of the second round, however, he was relentlessly attacking.

The previously unbeaten Bredahl, 27, was reduced to fighting purely for survival. From the third round on, his confidence disintegrated, and he began to run. Still, McCullough, 18-0 (14), had difficulty pinning the challenger down. In the fifth, he got through with a hurtful right and a followup flurry to the head. After that stanza, Bredahl 26-1 (9), returned to his corner with swelling over his left eye.

McCullough kept coming in the sixth and seventh, and in the eighth, referee Lupe Garcia (Mexico) warned the Dane that he had to start throwing punches. When Bredahl failed to do so, Garcia waved the bout over at the 1:55 mark. It went in the books as a stoppage, and not a disqualification.

The judges were Gale Van Hoy (USA), Alfred Asaro (France), and Sergio Silvi (Italy).

"It was a dream to fight in front of my home fans in the King's Hall, where I watched my hero, Barry McGuigan, fight as a kid," said a jubilant McCullough.

Afterward, Mat Tinley, McCullough's manager, offered unbeaten British sensation "Prince" Naseem Hamed £1-million to fight McCullough at bantamweight. The bout is unlikely to be made, however, as Hamed has been campaigning at higher weights.

McCullough's next fight will be in Dublin in February or March, either a defense against former world champion Jose Luis Bueno or a challenge of WBC super bantamweight titlist Daniel Zaragoza.

(12-2-95)

Brian Doogan

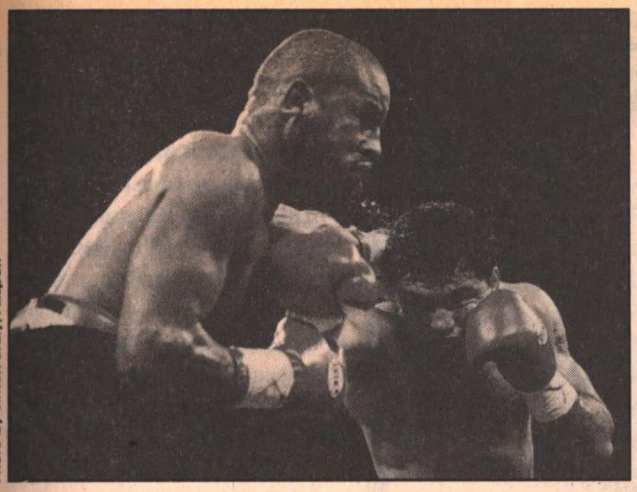


Photo by Simon Bruty/Allsport

Against Daniels, Vasquez never stopped trying

Julio Cesar Vasquez KO 11 Carl Daniels

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Attempting to regain the WBA junior middleweight title in the city of Sylvester Stallone's fistic fantasies, Vasquez succeeded in a manner that even fellow southpaw Rocky Balboa would have found unbelievable.

Trailing badly on all three cards, the 30-year-old Vasquez, 56-2 (39), Sante Fe, Argentina, began his second reign by crushing Daniels, 35-2 (22), St. Louis, Missouri, with a single overhand left. Daniels, also a southpaw, crashed hard, his head whiplashing into the canvas. He struggled to rise in time to beat the count of referee Charlie Sgrillo (USA), but when he began wobbling all over the ring, the bout was wisely halted at the 34-second mark.

Vasquez-Daniels was on the Tyson-Mathis undercard at the CoreStates Spectrum.

After Vasquez lost the title to Pernell Whitaker last March, "Sweet Pea" immediately vacated. That gave the 25-year-old Daniels the opportunity to meet Julio Cesar Green in a bout for the vacant title. He won on points, and this was his first defense.

A rangy boxer, Daniels quickly established his jab and maintained a safe distance. He soon began following with straight lefts, and 30 seconds into the third, a left dropped mandatory challenger Vasquez.

Boxing neatly, the champion maintained control until the sixth, when the slower Vasquez began moving closer and pounding the body. But Daniels shoulder-butted Vasquez to the canvas at the start of the eighth and then regained his rhythm until Vasquez wound up and landed his miracle punch 30 seconds into the 11th.

After 10 rounds, Robert Grasso (USA) had it 97-92, and Oswaldo Sanchez (Venezuela) and Hugo Pineda (Panama) 98-92.

"My brother died in March, and I dedicated this fight to him," said Vasquez. "I was determined to get the belt back for him."

"It wasn't something Vasquez did, it was what Carl did; he pulled back and dropped his hands," Joel Stephens, Daniels' manager, said of the knockout punch.

Stephens said Daniels is supposed to be rematched with Vasquez in March or April. Promoter Don King, however, has spoken of matching the Argentine with Terry Norris in a unification bout.

(12-16-95)
Steve Farhood

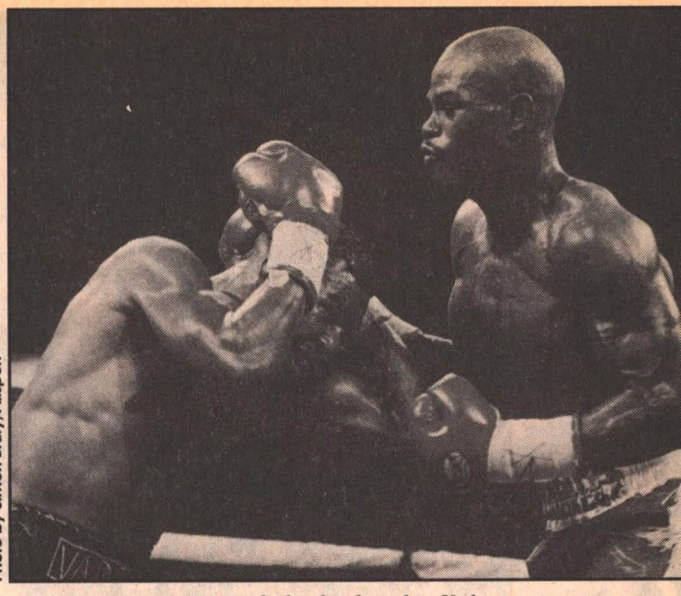


Photo by Simon Bruty/Allsport

Norris punched as he pleased vs. Vaden

Terry Norris W 12 Paul Vaden

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: This was the first unification bout in the 33-year history of the junior middleweight division. Judging by the results, if it's 33 years before the next one, it'll be too soon.

Given the deep-seeded animosity that exists between the San Diego-based co-champions, we were led to believe WBC titlist Norris and IBF king Vaden, who faced off on the Tyson-Mathis undercard at the CoreStates Spectrum, were going to pass on boxing gloves and advance directly to hatchets and sub-machine guns. As it turned out, "The Ultimate" might as well have presented his rival with a bouquet of roses in ring-center. Vaden hit hard, but only in the stareout during referee Rudy Battle's final instructions.

Vaden, 154, San Diego, California, fought so listlessly, the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission initially withheld his purse of $250,000 for effort unbecoming a world champion. (He was ultimately fined $1,000.) Norris, 151½, Campo, California, patiently picked away, scoring with combinations and digging hooks to the body when Vaden, 24-1 (12), backed to the ropes. Controlling the pace throughout, Norris, 41-6 (25), fought with control—which can't be said of some of his recent performances. For his part, Vaden waited ... and waited ... and waited. Apparently, what he was waiting for was the final bell.

William James scored 120-108, George Hill 119-109, and Barbara Perez 118-110, all for Norris. All three judges, as well as referee Battle, are from the USA.

"Paul Vaden was running his mouth before the fight," said Norris. "He can't say much now."

"I overstayed my welcome [at junior middleweight]," said Vaden, who struggled to make weight and promised to reappear at middleweight or super middleweight.

Vaden's manager, Arnie Rosenthal, was blunt in his assessment: "I wish I could tell you what it was, but he didn't fight. It was the closest thing to *no mas* I've been through."

The bout was televised by Fox.
Promoter: Don King
(12-16-95)
Steve Farhood

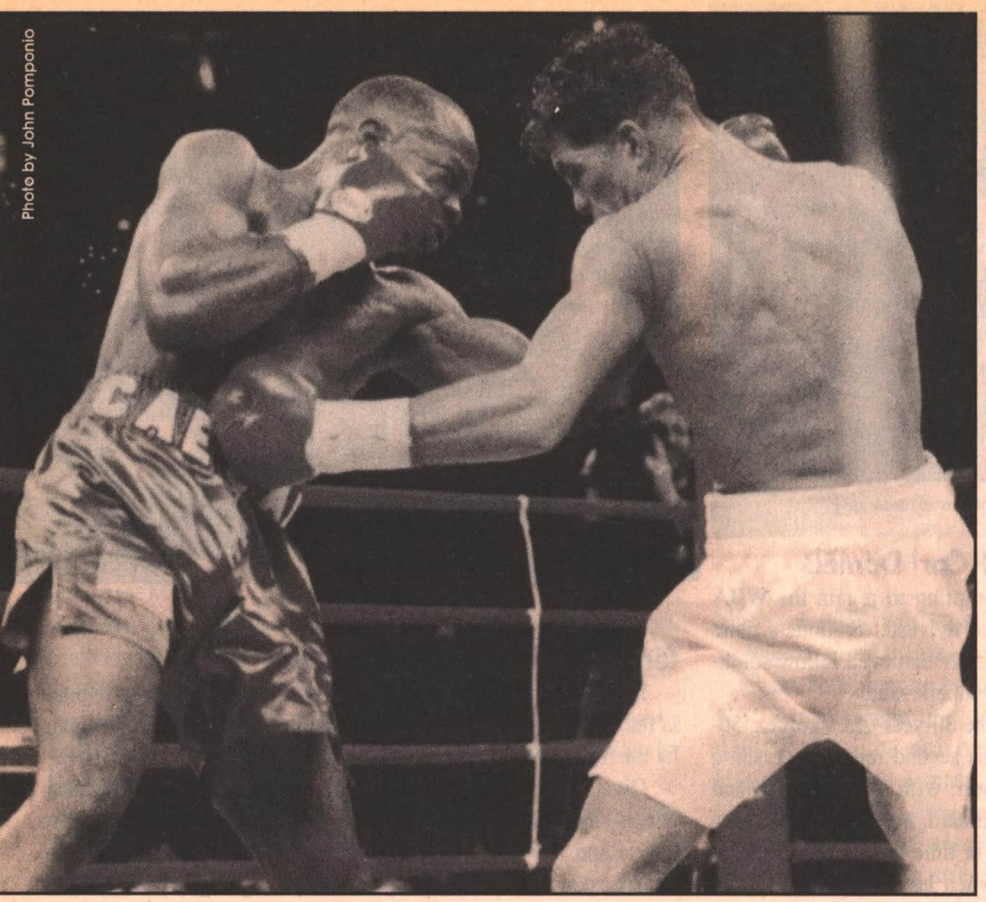


Photo by John Pomponio

Patterson and Gatti gritted it out at the Garden

Arturo Gatti W 12 Tracy Patterson

New York, New York: The main event, Oscar De La Hoya's kayo of Jesse James Leija, was a mere showcase. The hard-core fans who came to Madison Square Garden knew the IBF junior lightweight title fight between Patterson and Gatti would be the fight of the night. After a slow start, it was that and more.

The 30-year-old Patterson was making his first defense of the title he won from Ed Hopson last July. In a weird twist, his father, New York State Athletic Commission Chairman and former heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson, whom Tracy hasn't spoken with in months, oversaw the bout from ringside.

In a pick-'em fight, Patterson, 129¾, New Paltz, New York, was initially troubled by the challenger's busy style. The 23-year-old Gatti, 130, Jersey City, New Jersey, has the reputation of a big puncher, but he fought mostly on his toes in an attempt to capitalize on his three-inch reach advantage. One minute into the second round, he capitalized on his power, too, dropping Patterson with a sweet right uppercut. But just like his father, the champion picked himself up and resumed the battle.

Gatti, 24-1 (20), was given almost all of the early rounds, but most of his punches missed, and he was rewarded for ineffective aggressiveness. His effort, however, was most impressive; he boxed most of the way with a bruised and badly swollen left eye, and over the last two rounds, his right eye was marked as well.

Countering with thunderous rights that regularly snapped back the challenger's head, Patterson, 54-4-1 (39), swept the last three rounds on all cards. According to the judges, his rally came too late. The decision was unanimous, with Melvina Lathan scoring 113-112, Steve Weisfeld 114-113, and Leroy Brown a ridiculous 116-111. The referee was Wayne Kelly. All four officials are from the USA.

THE RING had Patterson ahead by 115-112. To the judges' credit, however, they were unanimous on nine of the 12 rounds. According to CompuBox, both fighters connected with about 50 percent of their punches, but Gatti threw 863 blows to Patterson's 553.

"I think I won the last five rounds," said Patterson.

"I think after I dropped him, he was afraid to come in," said Gatti.

Particularly impressed with Gatti's gritty performance was Carl Moretti, matchmaker for Main Events, which promotes the new champion.

"If he can take too many right hands and not go down, then he can take *anybody's* right hands," said Moretti. "Remember, Tracy's right hand is one of the hardest punches at any weight."

Moretti and Pat Lynch, Gatti's manager, said they'd like to match the newly crowned champion with comebacking three-division former champion Jeff Fenech.

The bout was televised by HBO.

Attendance: 16,027

(12-15-95)

Steve Farhood

Antonio Cermeno W 12 Jesus Salud

Maracay, Venezuela: Maybe Cermeno's title-winning victory over Wilfredo Vasquez wasn't a fluke after all.

Making his first defense of the WBA junior featherweight title, local favorite Cermeno scored a unanimous decision over former champion Salud before a crowd of 8,000 at the El Limon arena. Scores: 120-110, 119-110, and 118-112.

The 32-year-old Salud, Honolulu via the Philippines, applied pressure from the start against the taller champion, and by the middle rounds, his strategy seemed to be working. But Cermeno, Venezuela, accelerated in the seventh and threw far more punches than Salud, 50-7 (28), the rest of the way.

In the 11th, the 26-year-old Cermeno's ceaseless attack opened a gash over Salud's right eye. It was perhaps Salud's last try at a world title, and he desperately tried to rally in the 12th, but Cermeno, 22-1 (15), who was shelved after the Vasquez fight with a broken right wrist, was in excellent shape and survived the assault.

(11-26-95)

Mbulelo Botile KO 2 Reynaldo Hurtado

East London, South Africa: Making his second defense of the IBF bantamweight title, local favorite Botile enjoyed an easy night before a crowd of about 6,000 at the Basil Kenyon rugby stadium.

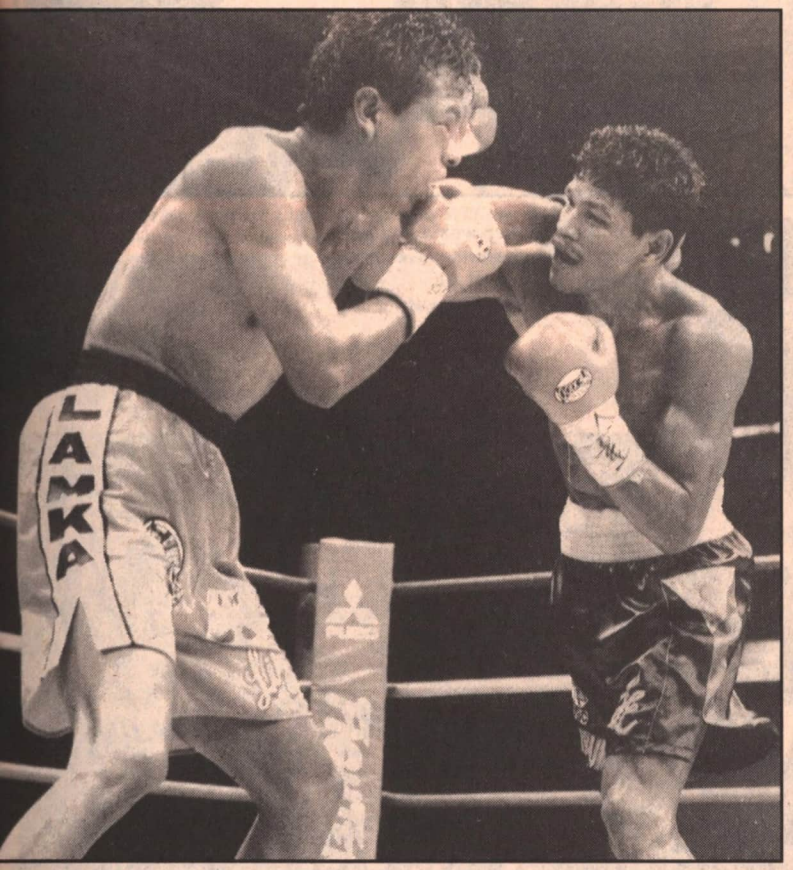
The 22-year-old Botile, 117½, East London, South Africa, never gave the taller Hurtado, 117¾, Colombia, a chance. The challenger pushed out his long left hand in the opening round, but Botile's blows were more effective.

Botile, 17-0 (11), found his rhythm in the second, and the 28-year-old Hurtado, 21-1-1 (17), couldn't keep him outside. Midway through the round, there was an exchange, with Botile proving more accurate. A left-right to the head stunned Hurtado, and a right to the jaw dropped him on the seat on his pants in ring-center. The Colombian sat on the canvas and shook his head as referee Lulama Mtya (South Africa) counted him out at the 2:58 mark.

The judges were Lynn Carter (USA), Vaughn Laprade (USA), and Alfred Buqwana (South Africa).

Botile is scheduled to make his next defense against mandatory challenger Ancee Gedeon of the USA.

Promoter: Rodney Berman (Golden Gloves Promotions)
(11-25-95)
Ron Jackson



Espinosa (right) was too strong for Medina

Luisito Espinosa W 12 Manuel Medina

Tokyo, Japan: The WBC featherweight title changed hands for the third time in 1995 when Espinosa scored a unanimous decision over Medina after 12 hard-fought rounds at Korakuen Hall. It was the first defense of Medina's second reign. He had previously held the IBF 126-pound crown.

Espinosa, 125, Japan via the Philippines, who had won the WBA bantamweight title in 1989, is a solid left-hooker, and he took the first two rounds with powerpunches. Medina, 126, Mexico, rallied to dominate the third, and in the fourth he staggered the challenger with a left-right that drove Espinosa to the ropes.

The 28-year-old Espinosa, 37-7 (19), won the fifth, catching Medina, 51-7 (23), with a big hook, and from the sixth to the finish, the champion boxed with a badly swollen right eye. Medina, 24, was busy enough to capture rounds six, eight, and nine, but Espinosa was clearly in command over the last three stanzas. Medina kept his hands moving throughout. Espinosa, however, fired the bigger blows.

Chuck Hassett (USA) scored 116-112, and Robert Flaherty (USA) and Malcolm Bulner (Australia) 115-113. The referee was Dr. James Jen Kin (USA).

At the start of the year, the WBC featherweight champion was Kevin Kelley. He was dethroned by Alejandro Gonzalez, who in turn lost to Medina.

Promoter: Joe Koizumi
(12-11-95)
Joe Koizumi

Shinji Takehara W 12 Jorge Castro

Tokyo, Japan: Taking the initiative from the start, the lanky Takehara dropped Castro, then weathered the defending champion's desperate rallies to win the WBA middleweight title by unanimous decision at Korakuen Hall. The unbeaten Japanese is the first fighter from his country to win the world middleweight crown.

It was Castro's fifth defense.

The 23-year-old Takehara, 160, Japan, who had made six defenses of the OPBF 160-pound crown, started strongly, staggering Castro, 160, Argentina, with an overhand right in round one. Bleeding from the mouth, Castro, 28, came forward in the second and attempted to trade. But a wicked left uppercut to the liver floored him in the third, and the 6'1½" Takehara capitalized on his reach advantage to dominate through the sixth.

Castro, 98-4-2 (68), started accelerating in the seventh and eighth. His rally was short-lived, however, with Takehara, 24-0 (18), leaving him groggy with a right uppercut and furious combinations in the ninth. Castro attempted to pull off a miracle comeback over the last two rounds, but Takehara fought back to protect his lead.

Washington Gonzalez (Chile) scored 118-112, Manuel Gonzalez (Panama) 116-114, and Moo Hong Moon (South Korea) 117-111. The referee was Mitch Halpern (USA).

Promoter: Oki Boxing Club
(12-19-95)
Joe Koizumi ■

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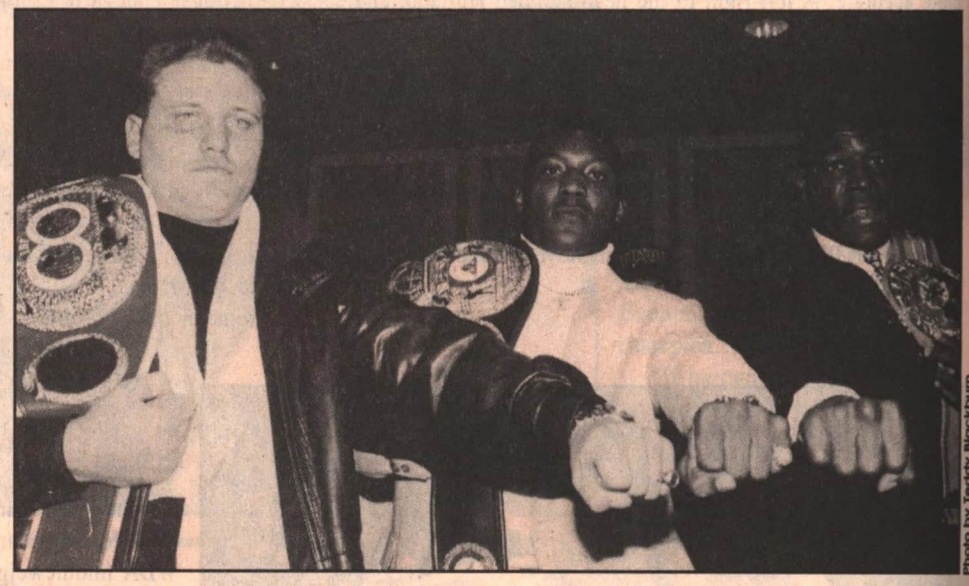


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Ladeez and gentlemen, presenting the heavyweight champions of the world—and they've got the belts to prove it: (from left) Frans Botha (IBF), Bruce Seldon (WBA), and Frank Bruno (WBC).

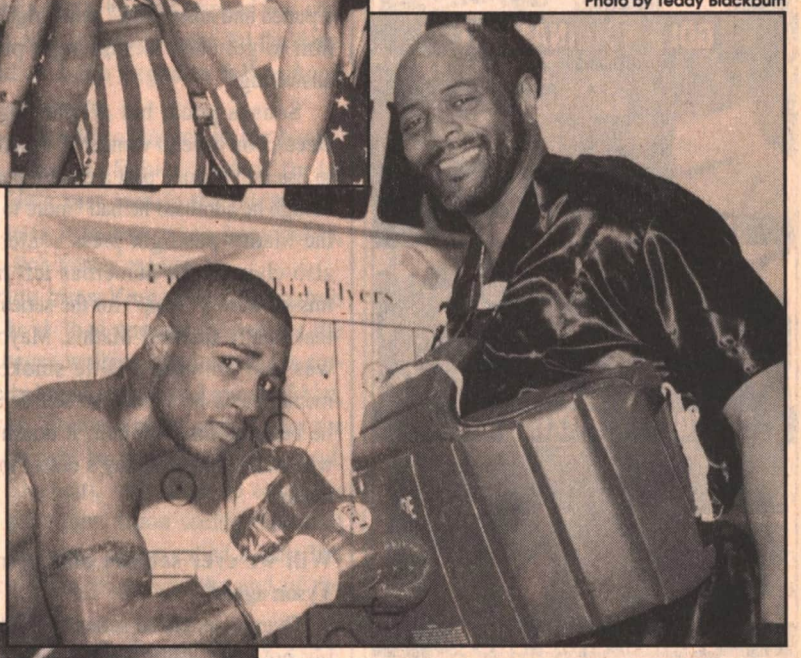
Photo by Bob Carson

A pair of former world welterweight champions, Carmen Basilio and Virgil Akins, were recently spotted in St. Louis.

Heavyweight Bobby Czyz was honored as Man of the Year at the American Association for the Improvement of Boxing's annual luncheon in Tarrytown, New York. Flanking Czyz are the presenters, AAIB Chairman Steve Acunto (center) and THE RING Editor Steve Farhood.

WBA heavyweight champion Bruce Seldon enjoyed himself at the Tyson-Mathis fight in Philadelphia. He didn't have to face "Iron Mike," and he got to hang out with round-card girls instead of boxing writers.

Photo by Teddy Blackburn



While Oba Carr waits to beat up on WBA welterweight champion Ike Quartey, he's keeping busy by working over trainer Stacy McKinley.

You think he's ordering a pizza? Light heavyweight William Guthrie never allows training to interfere with his social life.

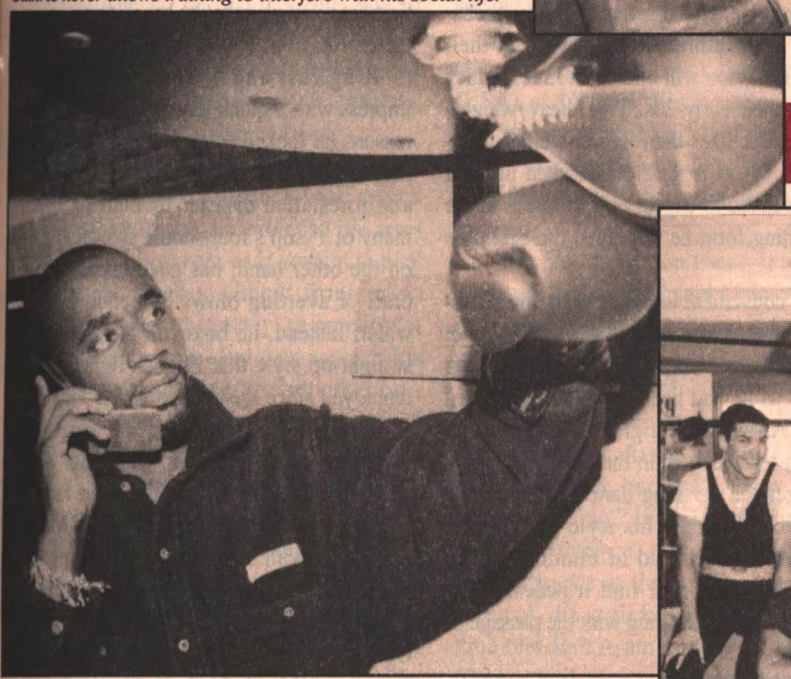


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Miami's Fifth Street Gym housed an unusual amount of talent, as illustrated by this photo. Top row: Ernesto Corrall (manager), Luis Sarria (trainer); Middle row: Guillermo Dutschmann, Jose Legra, Doug Vaillant, Willie Pastrano, Allan Harmon; Bottom row: Florentino Fernandez, Luis Rodriguez, Cassius Clay.

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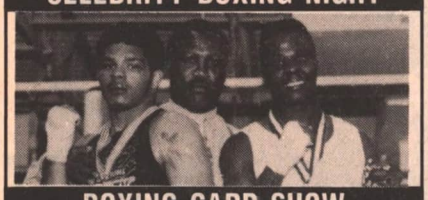

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Mike Tyson

(Continued from page 37)

Tyson was in Philadelphia training for the Mathis bout, Bright told THE RING he was trying to get his charge to return to the D'Amato methodology that had made him such an effective fighter in the first place.

"Mike had gotten into the habit of taking a punch and answering," said Bright. "I want him to get back to *slipping* a punch and answering."

Sounds good, but at this stage of his career, you have to wonder if Tyson is going to listen to anyone past a certain point. Even though he admitted he had "more to learn" at the Mathis postfight press conference, he also claimed the numerous left hooks he missed were a "setup" for the series of rights that finally finished Mathis. Maybe Tyson was just blowing a little smoke for the media, but if he's really so self-deluded that he believes his own bull, it doesn't matter who trains him. The guy's out of touch with reality.

Will we ever see the old, prime-time Tyson again?

Over an extended series of fights, probably not. Few athletes are as good in their early-30s (Tyson will turn 30 in June) as they were in their early-20s. True, heavyweights tend to peak later than lighter-weight fighters, and Tyson is far from washed up. But it's unrealistic to expect him to return to the rip-snorting form he displayed the first time around.

It is convenient to compare Tyson's situation to that of Muhammad Ali, who was not the same fighter when he returned to the ring in 1970 as he had been when he was exiled in '67. Ali was still a great fighter, and he went on to twice regain the title, but he was no longer the dazzling dancing-master. He was forced to adapt his style and rely on guile and guts instead of blinding speed. Tyson, likewise, will find it necessary to fashion a style in keeping with the passage of time.

This is not to say Tyson is doomed to be the pedestrian mauler of the Mathis fight. He'll gradually get back into a groove, and when faced with an opponent he respects, the beast will rage once again. And when it does, even the Bowes and Lewises will be in grave danger. Remember, Ali coasted when faced with non-threatening adversaries such as Jurgen Blin and Rudi Lubbers, then turned up the heat for the likes of Frazier and George Foreman. Expect Tyson to do likewise.

What can we expect against Frank Bruno?

Not only is Bruno, 40-4 (38), several notches above McNeeley and Mathis in terms of ability, but he'll take an entirely different approach. Although Mathis didn't forego defense for an all-out attack, like McNeeley, he essentially took the fight to Tyson. Conversely, Bruno will attempt to keep Tyson at an arm's length, set him up with his jab, and then try to plant his big right hand.

In spite of his many shortcomings, the British bomber is a dangerous fighter for the first three or four rounds. Tyson, who was rocked by a Bruno hook in their February '89 fight, is well-aware of this. But he also knows he shook off the Englishman's best shot and bludgeoned him into a fifth-round TKO. In his mind, Tyson is surely convinced that if he did it once, he can do it again. Bruno will also be self-assured, believing not only that he can finish what he started the first time, but also that he has improved since then.

Ring rust and Tyson's eagerness to impress with a quick kayo were not the only reasons he looked so sloppy against Mathis. Mathis utilized good upper body movement and forestalled disaster by ducking under many of Tyson's roundhouse swings. Bruno, on the other hand, has never mastered the craft of averting blows by bending at the waist. Instead, he boxes in the traditional straight-up style that English fighters have employed since the days of James Figg. It's highly conceivable some of the haymakers that whistled over the top of Mathis' head would have drilled Bruno flush in the face.

Still, had it been Bruno instead of Mathis in the ring with the nonchalant Tyson at the Spectrum, you'd have given the WBC champion a decent shot at retaining the title. Oddsmakers have installed Tyson as a 6-1 favorite on March 16, but in hindsight, had they met on *December* 16, even money might have been a more appropriate price.

However, Bruno will be facing a different Tyson at the MGM Grand, a fired-up version

hellbent on winning back one of the belts he's been missing since Douglas kayoed him more than six years ago. Look for both men to connect solidly in a free-swinging shootout. But Tyson's chin is better than Bruno's, and that, as much as anything else, will enable him to prevail, probably around the halfway mark. It will be a fight that answers only some of the questions posed by the Mathis bout. The rest will have to wait until Tyson meets either Bowe or Lewis. ■

De La Hoya

(Continued from page 42)

lucky hook or two, and he fought accordingly. As it turned out, the biggest difference between the fighters wasn't De La Hoya's six-inch advantage in reach, but his six-megaton advantage in power. Like Mathis 24 hours later, Leija was finished by the first blow that struck him flush.

Only a few months ago, De La Hoya, like another celebrated Los Angelino, Divine Brown, was thought to be a one-dimensional hooker. Then Molina introduced him to the occasionally ugly art of infighting, with De La Hoya immediately finding himself better for the experience. Against Ruelas, he resumed the role of counterpunching assassin. He boxed patiently and slipped neatly against the lanky Hernandez, and fought defensively, albeit for one round, against Leija.

The 22-year-old De La Hoya, 135, Whittier, California, opened with a Jack Johnson-like stance; he extended his arms and opened his gloves, as if content to pick off Leija's punches without firing back. This was a planned strategy; he practiced it in his dressing room, and then again in his corner while awaiting the introductions. He also featured lateral movement, and the 29-year-old Leija, 134¾, San Antonio, Texas, was forced to limit his attack to rights to the body.

"I must've been landing because I could see his body turning red," Leija said.

De La Hoya carried the round by stringing together a hook, a left-right, and a double-hook in the final minute. During the rest period, there were no signs suggesting the bout wouldn't last another few rounds. But if De La Hoya proved one thing in the year gone by, it's that regardless of the caliber of opposition, his power is never to be underestimated.

De La Hoya, 20-0 (18), moved forward at the start of the second, and Leija, 30-2-2 (14), responded with exaggerated upper-body movement. A four-punch combination seemed harmless enough, but when De La Hoya followed with a hook to the chin—*boom!* Leija rose at the nine-count of referee Ron Lipton (USA). He instinctively fought back off the ropes, but De La Hoya is a poised finisher, and within seconds, Leija found himself trapped in a corner. This time a straight right did the damage, and as Leija began to fall, a hook helped him down.

"He gets a lot of torque in his hook," Lipton, a former fighter, said of De La Hoya. "He's very lean in the midsection, and he uses it to turn when he punches, just like Bob Foster used to."

Picking himself up at 9½, Leija told Lipton he'd "had enough." Then, as the referee began walking him back to his corner (the bell had sounded), Leija told him, "I'm okay." It didn't really matter what the fighter thought because his chief second, Richie Giachetti, was about to enter the ring to surrender. Upon seeing Giachetti waving his arms, Lipton called a halt. The time of the stoppage was the end of the second round.

The judges were Ramon Pina Acevedo (Dominican Republic), John Stewart (USA), and Samuel Viruet (USA).

"Styles make fights," said De La Hoya, "and I always thought Leija had a perfect style for me. He doesn't run, and he comes forward."

"The punch you don't see—it eventually got me in the end," said Leija. "A fighter knows when he's beat, and I was beat at that point."

***

Two days before the Leija fight, De La Hoya told THE RING, "I don't want to show too much because I know Chavez will be scouting." Indeed, "J.C. Superstar" was in attendance, but instead of making an appearance at the postfight press conference, he quickly left the Garden. Promoter Bob Arum said De La Hoya and Chavez will appear in separate bouts on February 9, and then clash in Las Vegas on either May 6, during the Cinco de Mayo holiday celebration, or June 7.

(Continued on page 58)

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De La Hoya

(Continued from page 57)

Given the ages and career-paths of the fighters, De La Hoya-Chavez will be reminiscent of Sugar Ray Leonard-Roberto Duran I. But there are plenty of differences, too. This time, it'll be the younger fighter who is moving up in weight. And where Duran was 29 and close to, if not still in, his prime, Chavez will be almost 34 and far from his. Even De La Hoya says his future foe is "a bit worn out."

But if Chavez summons one last Herculean effort in an attempt to break De La Hoya in half, The Golden Boy will find himself in the type of fight he's been fantasizing about. And won't we *all* love that.

Against Duran, Leonard won respect but lost the fight. Against Chavez, De La Hoya seems a good bet to win it all.

And if that happens, look for the best of 1995 to be 1996's Fighter of the Year, too. ■

New Faces

(Continued from page 16)

"Definitely," he said. "If I didn't think I'd be a world champion someday, I wouldn't be doing it. That's always been my dream."

Calzaghe, who is trained by his father Enzo, a former musician of Sardinian descent, threw his first competitive punches as a nine-year-old. He lost the rumble, but had a good excuse—the other boy's father was the referee.

"I lost a majority decision and cried my eyes out in the ring," he recalled. "But I beat him three times after that."

That is no surprise. Defeats since that long-ago debut have been few and far between. Instead, there have come a regular supply of trophies: three British Schools titles, a British Boys Clubs crown, a Welsh Youth championship, and a gold medal from the Gaelic Games in Nova Scotia.

A wrist injury kept Calzaghe on the sidelines for 18 months before the start of a glittering senior career. After losing his first Welsh amateur final to Michael Smyth, these days a hard-hitting pro welterweight, he won the title three times, each year going on to claim the British title as well. The triple-crown was achieved at three different weights for only the second time in the history of competition, which dates back to 1881.

At 21, Calzaghe took the big step into the paid ranks and was soon creating havoc among the country's super middleweights. Of his first nine opponents, only former French Foreign Legionnaire Spencer Alton and awkward ex-kickboxer Trevor Ambrose lasted into the second round.

It made no difference when Duff and Lawless began to look across the Atlantic for opposition. Indianapolis veteran Frankie Minton had been in with a half-dozen world champions, from Iran Barkley to Virgil Hill, but Calzaghe demolished him in 85 seconds. The next American, West Virginian Robert Curry, managed only four seconds longer.

Between those bouts, however, Calzaghe had been forced to rely on a referee's score-

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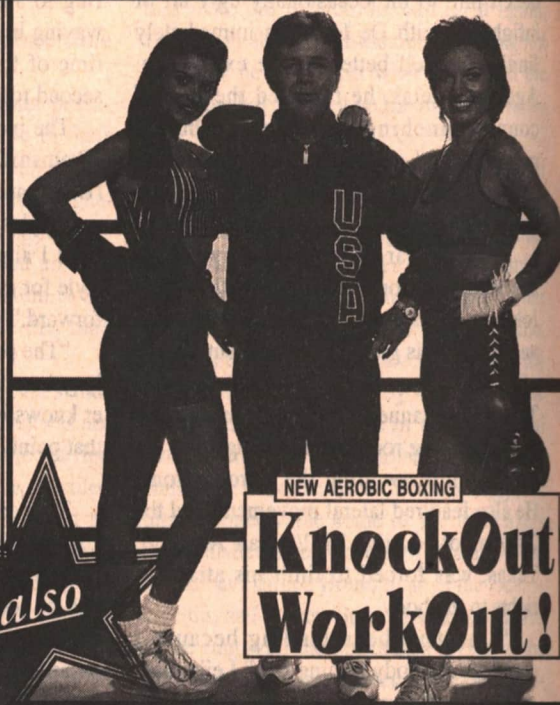

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card for the first time. In doing so, he answered a lot of questions.

Left without a foe because of a withdrawal on the day of the fight, the young Welshman agreed to tackle Bobbi Joe Edwards, a tough-as-old-boots campaigner from Manchester, a cousin of Chris Eubank, and, most significantly, a *cruiserweight*. Calzaghe won every round.

"The Edwards fight proved he had stamina," said Duff. "It also showed he could take a shot."

Those two factors were emphasized in October when, in the opulent surroundings of London's Royal Albert Hall, Calzaghe halted Barcelona Olympian Steve Wilson in eight rounds to acquire the vacant British 168-pound title. Calzaghe admits he went a bit wild after hurting the Scot in the opening seconds, but as soon as he regained his composure, there was only one possible outcome.

"Wilson was grabbing me all the time, just trying to hang on," he said. "But I threw so many punches that he had to go in the end. Perhaps if I'd settled down and picked my shots better, I could have ended it earlier. But if I can box bad and still win, watch out when I box good!"

Duff agrees the new champion is somewhat unorthodox, and at times can look less than elegant.

"I don't mind boxers doing things wrong, as long as they're good at it," he said. "We're not likely to try and change him. He stays well and he's got natural stamina. I'm going more by the amount of work he does in the gym than what we've yet seen in fights, but he has a good chin.

"He's got fast hands and can hit with both of them. In fact, he has virtually everything that a world champion needs. And being a southpaw is an advantage, too."

The patience required against Wilson will also be necessary as Calzaghe waits for his opportunity at a higher level. Duff, who has guided seven fighters to world titles, has never been a man to rush his charges, and he thinks his fighter needs some further education. Fortunately, the Welshman is in agreement.

"In a way, I've only had four fights," Calzaghe said. "I don't really count the ones that were over early. You can't learn anything from them. But from now on I'm going to get better and stronger, fight by fight. I'm in no rush. In about 16 months, I'll be ready."

Ready for whom? "Anybody who's out there," he said. "I'd love to fight Nigel Benn, though I expect he'll have finished by then. But Steve Collins is the one I want. I'd fancy him *now*."

But even Calzaghe draws the line—for the time being—at Roy Jones. "He's awesome, definitely the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world," he said. "At the moment he's at his peak, and I'm still learning. Let him burn for a bit. Wait till I'm at my peak and he's 30-odd and starting to slip. That'll be the time to take him."

The king of Pensacola, Florida, then, can breathe easily for a while. But the rest of the world's super middleweights should remember the name. They may not be able to spell or pronounce it (it's CAL-ZAH-GAY), but they will certainly be hearing more of it in the years to come. ■

Gareth Jones is a boxing writer based in Cardiff, Wales.

Foreign Domination

(Continued from page 31)

dleweight Hagler. In April 1995 came one last symbolic victory: New Mexico's Danny Romero became the first American flyweight champion since Wolgast in 1935 by defeating Colombia's Francisco Tejedor.

Today, of course, boxing's landscape is drastically different from the mid-'70s. There are 17 weight classes, and one of the minor alphabet organizations recently created an 18th division, called, of all things, super cruiserweight. The IBF, an American-based organization, joined the WBA and WBC in the '80s, and as we went to press, there were 14 American champions of a possible 49, including nine of 17 from junior middleweight to heavyweight. It's a far cry from 20 years ago, when only Ali carried the American flag.

"It was no big deal that we had only one American champion," said Dundee. "Besides, Ali was enough. He carried the ball for all of us." ■

Roger Mooney is a sportswriter for the Sun Herald in Port Charlotte, Florida. He is a frequent contributor to The Ring.

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Gabe Ruelas

(Continued from page 45)

ager. "Right now, he just wants to sort things out himself."

The two most publicized ring deaths in history were those of Benny "Kid" Paret and Duk Koo Kim. Paret, a former welterweight champion, was knocked out by Emile Griffith at Madison Square Garden in 1962, and died 10 days later. Kim, a lightweight contender, was kayoed in the 14th round by Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini in Las Vegas in 1982. The South Korean died five days later.

After short periods of inactivity, both Griffith and Mancini returned to the ring. They won their first fights back and successfully continued their careers. It remains unclear if Ruelas will ever again be the same man, much less the same fighter.

***

"If I hit a guy hard or saw him stagger, I was scared of him being hurt," said Griffith. "I got over it a little. Even now, I don't like to see people get hit."

With each new boxing tragedy, the media forces Griffith to relive his nightmare. He speaks about the Paret fight in a whisper, his sing-song Caribbean accent restricted by the emotion of a painful memory. He hesitated when asked to analyze Ruelas, offering only that each man is different, and thus impacted differently.

No one, not Griffith, Mancini, or even Ruelas himself, knew how the fighter would react until he returned to the ring. Ruelas is an action fighter. More like Mancini than Griffith. He does not box so much as he fights. On the night he won the title from Jesse James Leija, he channeled his aggression and sustained it for 12 intense rounds. In his next fight, he exploded early, knocking out Freddie Liberatore. Then came the Garcia fight.

There is an instinct that allows fighters to climb those three wooden steps and perform. Ruelas and Garcia shared that instinct. They fought for money, for titles, for other people's entertainment. But no one *made* them fight. They willingly subjected themselves to the punishment that accompanies their sport. They assumed that risk—and its consequences—on their own.

Ruelas had finished off many wounded fighters, but on that fateful night, he couldn't finish off Garcia. The truth was, he almost got bored beating him up. Afterward, he admitted regretting not trying harder for a knockout. Now there may be no more knockouts.

"By the time Ray went back to the gym, he was ready to fight again," Dave Wolf, Mancini's manager, said of the former WBA lightweight champion. "He wouldn't hold back on sparring partners. He was punching in multiple combinations to the head without hesitation."

"When I had my little accident," said Griffith, "I retired for one month just to get myself together. Then I went back to the gym. I didn't want to hit guys. But after a while, I got used to it again."

The instincts eventually returned to Griffith and Mancini. But after a ring tragedy, how long a layoff is long enough? Ruelas faced Nelson seven months after the Garcia fight.

Mancini-Kim was held on November 13, 1982. Mancini returned to the ring almost three months later with a 10-round non-title win over British lightweight champion George Feeney. He opened training camp for the Feeney fight in January.

"I had to get right back into it or else I never would have done it," he said. "For me, it was important to get back in the gym. If you wait too long, things begin to fester in your mind."

Griffith-Paret was on March 24, 1962. In his first fight back, Griffith defended the welterweight title by decisioning Ralph Dupas almost four months later. He fought four more times before the year ended.

Against Dupas, Griffith started slowly, much the way Ruelas did against Nelson. Ultimately, it was his co-managers, Gil Clancy and Howie Albert, who coaxed him into a winning effort.

"I was very distracted," recalled Griffith. "I was doing everything else except doing the right thing. When the guy started hitting me, I knew I had to do what I had to do. I got determined."

***

"You go through a lot of self-examination," said Mancini. "I used to get a cut or a black eye, and that was my badge of honor. Then, after the Kim fight, I thought,

(Continued on page 62)

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Gabe Ruelas

(Continued from page 61)

Who's to say it won't be me next time?"

The physical part should come back for Ruelas. The combinations will flow again. Ruelas has not forgotten how to fight. Instead, he just hasn't allowed himself to do so again. The rest of his career will depend not only on how he recovers from his loss to Nelson, but how he continues to recover from the psychological pain of Garcia's death. It won't be easy.

"Ray had to be around people with whom he could verbalize his feelings," said Wolf. "It was no time to be introspective. Fortunately, he came from a family that verbalized their feelings. He could talk to his mother and father about it."

"It was very rough for me," said Griffith. "Everybody doesn't have the same emotions. But it is rough no matter who you are. It was always on my mind when I fought. But ultimately, I knew it was me or him. If I didn't hit him, he was going to hit me."

Mancini, who was trained by Murphy Griffith (Emile's uncle), sought advice from Emile after the Kim fight. Where Griffith was primarily a boxer, perhaps Mancini was forced to overcome his ordeal because his success was predicated on winning toe-to-toe shootouts. It is the same for Ruelas. Intensity allowed Mancini to go on and score stoppages of Orlando Romero, Johnny Torres, and Bobby Chacon. And he fought courageously in a pair of brutal title fights with Livingstone Bramble.

"If Ray were consumed with self-doubt, he could never have engaged as competitively as he did in battle," said Wolf. "Nevertheless, there always comes a moment when you are alone with your feelings. Ultimately, he had to deal with this himself."

The media has done very little to help Ruelas forget the tragedy. Mancini said that is not likely to change. "He will always be, 'Gabe Ruelas, the junior lightweight champion best remembered for ...,'" said Mancini. "That's how it is for me. I like to think I brought something to the lightweight division when I fought. But it's still, 'Ray Mancini, best remembered for ... '"

***

Days before the Nelson fight, it was apparent Ruelas hadn't removed the specter of Garcia from his thoughts. He announced he would donate his portion of the pay-per-view revenues to start a trust fund for Garcia's children.

"That shows a caring man," said Dan Goossen. "In some aspects, Gabriel is such a feeling person that [the tragedy] might affect him more than others. I don't think he has a mental disorder or a problem. But he has a helluva burden."

"Hindsight is always 20-20," said Wolf, "but they made a real mistake by fighting Azumah Nelson. The only reason I can speak about this confidently is because I went through it."

Ruelas first met Nelson in February 1993, losing a majority decision. After that fight, Nelson drew with Leija, then lost the title to the Texan. Coming into the rematch with Ruelas, the 37-year-old had been inactive for 19 months. He seemed a safe opponent. But for Ruelas, the definition of safe changed after the Garcia fight.

In the cases of Griffith and Mancini, the caliber of opposition and the sites of their return fights were carefully selected. "We got Emile someone who couldn't punch," said Albert. "We were cautious that first fight back."

Although Griffith fought more main events at Madison Square Garden than any other fighter in history, the Dupas bout was purposely held in Las Vegas. Dupas was a 12-year veteran, and though he'd go on to win the junior middleweight title a year after fighting Griffith, he was clearly nearing the end of his career. Moreover, in 134 career bouts, he'd score just 19 knockouts.

Mancini's opponent barely bordered on world class. Feeney was 26 years old and had a 16-7 record. Seven of his wins had come by knockout. He had won the British title in his previous fight.

"I was absolutely adamant that Ray's first fight back be a non-title in the most hospitable environment we could find," said Wolf. "So we fought in Italy. [Promoter] Bob Arum told us there was a million-dollar purse if we went straight to Kenny Bogner. I said no, and Arum stuck

by us. He stood by us completely. The [Feeney] fight wasn't a big-money fight compared to what Ray was making then. But getting that first fight under his belt allowed him to remain a champion for another year-and-a-half."

At a recent press conference in New York, Arum took blame for allowing Ruelas to fight Nelson. Both Griffith and Mancini agreed that almost any other junior lightweight would have been a more suitable opponent. However, Goossen said neither he nor Ruelas harbored any regrets about having fought Nelson.

"Everything that happened prior to the fight [produced] positive signs," Goossen explained. "His brother Rafael [a former IBF lightweight champion] said he looked great in the gym. I know Joe [Goossen] had him in great physical condition. The day of the fight, at no time did I detect that he had any mental problems. The first sign of it was the first punch he threw. Until we saw Gabriel in the ring, we didn't know what to expect."

That first punch was a wild right that nearly landed on Nelson's back. That was about as aggressive as Ruelas got in the bout, his third defense, which was held at the Fantasy Springs Casino in Indio, California. Moments later, he was dropped by a counter right. He got up and seemed fine.

Ruelas, 130, Sylmar, California, did not attack the way he had in past fights. Instead, he edged backward or lunged awkwardly, not sure if he should counter or lead. Meanwhile, Nelson, 130, Accra, Ghana, was counterpunching with precision.

The fourth round was Ruelas' best. He had the challenger backing up for most of the session. But late in the round, Nelson, 38-3-2 (27), spun out of a corner and threw a double-hook. The first punch landed solidly on Ruelas' rib cage. The second glanced off the top of his head. Ruelas, 41-3 (23), dropped to his knees. Nelson scored with another left to the head, this one an illegal blow. Ruelas rested his head on the top of his gloves. He barely beat the count of referee Marty Denkin (USA). When the action resumed, only six seconds remained.

Joe Goossen, Ruelas' trainer, gave him a verbal beating before the start of the fifth. He later explained he had tried to press all the buttons. Ruelas didn't respond. He shouldn't have gone out for the next round, but he did. Nelson stalked him, scoring with almost everything he threw. Ruelas barely fought back. Finally, Denkin stepped in at the 1:20 mark.

The judges were Carol Castellano (USA), Angel Guzman (Puerto Rico), and Daniel Van De Wiele (Belgium).

The next day, Goossen said Ruelas had been ill before the fight. He had eaten something with garlic that hadn't agreed with him. "We know what transpired with the Garcia situation, but we also know on the day of the fight, he didn't feel well," said Goossen. "He felt very sick the day of the fight. Whether that was induced by Jimmy Garcia, I don't know."

***

"It took my heart from the game," Mancini said of Kim's death. "There was something missing when I came back."

While that hardly sounds like a him-or-me attitude, Mancini maintains he lost a passion for fighting after the tragedy. His pursuit of financial security for his family provided the motivation that enabled him to continue fighting.

Griffith fought 15 more years after the Paret fight and won the middleweight title twice. But Albert insisted his fighter was never the same after the tragedy. "Emile never got all of it back," said Albert. "There were times he'd fight in the Garden again and force someone into a corner and then just back away."

"To this day, [the Kim fight] probably affects all of us in different ways," said Wolf. "It's made me absolutely obsessive about prefight physicals. I've had three champions since Ray, and I've never gotten to the point where I was so wound up in winning that I was oblivious to the potential negative consequences."

Ruelas will forever be aware of those consequences. In fact, he'll most likely carry them with him each time he climbs up those three wooden steps.

"If anything has straightened him up, it was [the Nelson] fight," said Dan Goossen. "He wants to get his career back going again. Right now, the major thing is to get by the outside-the-ropes situation. We're going to let Gabriel work it out with who he feels comfortable with. I want Gabriel making those decisions.

"He'll fight again."

But will he ever be the same when he does? ■

Robert Cassidy is a frequent contributor to The Ring.

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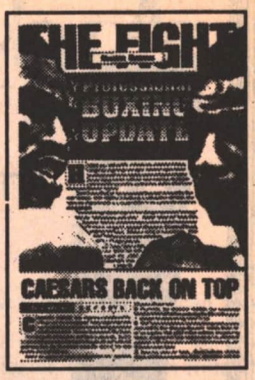

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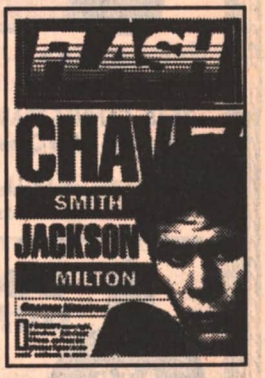

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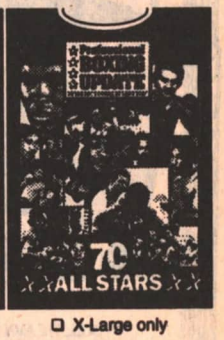

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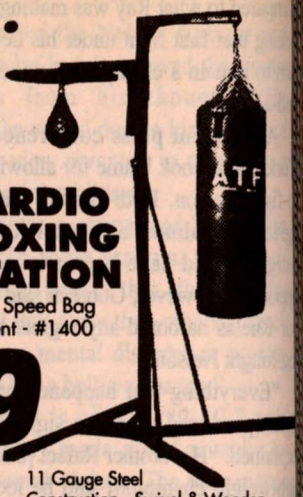

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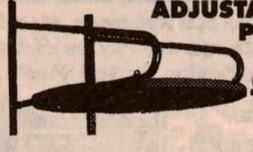

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BOXING COLLECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

By Don Scott

If you wanted to start collecting boxing memorabilia at an advanced level, one that provided a maximum but not impossible challenge, what would be a good launching point? I have a few such places in mind. But how about memorabilia connected to one legendary fighter, a champion from the Golden Age of the '20s? Who would that be?

The fighter died at a young age. He was fearless and ferocious in the ring, a consummate ladies' man, and a legend in his own time—as well as ours. He was peerless among middleweights and fought all comers. He was "The Pittsburgh Windmill," Harry Greb.

Greb was born in 1894. He fought from 1913 to 1926, when he died as a result of complications from an eye operation. He held the middleweight title from 1923 to 1926. In 1922, he gave Gene Tunney his only career defeat over 15 bloody rounds in a bout for the American light heavyweight title. Tunney would avenge that defeat four times, but in at least two of their subsequent matches, certain observers thought Greb deserved the decision. I know. I have a one-sheet program from one of those fights, and the original owner had circled Tunney's name as the winner but wrote "Greb robbed" on the program.

Greb's detractors saw him as crude and dirty, but the fighter instilled fierce loyalty in his fans, who saw him as the embodiment of true ring grit. That loyalty was continued by generations of fans who not only never saw Greb in person, but never watched him on film either. But lots of folks *think* they have. One erudite New York columnist of some note once wrote that Greb was one of the great fighters of all times, "as the film clearly shows." Well, the late Jimmy Jacobs searched most of his adult life for the one film he believed existed of a Greb fight (one of the Tunney scraps), and never found it. And Jimmy had them *all* at Big Fights Inc. Strangely enough, a film did surface after Jacobs' death—and long after the aforementioned columnist had retired his pen—that showed Greb sparring and playing handball.

Greb died when he was just past his prime. He had been dethroned by Tiger Flowers, and had again been defeated in an attempt to regain the crown. His eyesight failing, he wanted to try it one more time. He never got the chance.

If you accept challenges too easily, read no further because this is one collecting challenge that will drive you nuts.

Predictably, Greb's memorabilia is held very dear, and little has survived. For every one Greb program, 500 Jack Dempsey programs can be found. There is only one Greb ticket that is fairly common, that from a fight against Mickey Walker that was postponed. The full ticket will sell for about $100.

There is one book on Greb's life, *Give Him To The Angels*, by James R. Fair. Fair knew Greb well, and instead of the standard biographical stuff, his book offers the flavor of Greb's life. Though hardly a classic boxing work, it is a must-read for Greb aficionados.

I have been collecting for about 15 years, and I'm always asking, "Got anything on Greb?" So far I've collected the following: a signed photo, signed gloves, two ticket stubs, two tickets (one without stub), and four programs, one of which is a mimeographed sheet that was distributed free with a copy of THE RING at the time. I have about four photos, of which all but one are second-generation and fairly common.

I know of two other programs, a couple of handwritten letters, a signed postcard, and about three signed photos. I'm sure there's more out there, but where?

Just last month the only known Greb poster surfaced (from a bout vs. Mike O'Dowd). But the trickle of Greb memorabilia is not even close to the demand. And that means the price of anything related to Greb is going up. ■

Don Scott is editor and publisher of ***Boxing Collectors' News*** *and may be contacted through* THE RING.

WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by THE RING are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of October 1995, WBC and IBF ratings were compiled as of December 1995.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Frank Bruno (GB)	C	–	–
Bruce Seldon (USA)	–	C	–
Francois Botha (SA)	–	2	C
Mike Tyson (USA)	1	1	1
Lennox Lewis (GB)	2	5	8
Oliver McCall (USA)	3	–	3
Tony Tucker (USA)	4	3	10
Henry Akinwande (GB)	5	4	5
Alexandr Zolkin (RUS)	6	9	–
Jeremy Williams (USA)	7	–	–
Larry Donald (USA)	8	–	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	9	–	–
Andrew Golota (POL)	10	11	7
Michael Moorer (USA)	11	6	–
Lionel Butler (USA)	–	7	–
Vaughn Bean (USA)	21	8	9
Tim Witherspoon (USA)	17	10	–
Buster Mathis Jr. (USA)	16	–	2
Corrie Sanders (SA)	12	–	4
Axel Schulz (GER)	–	–	6

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Anaclet Wamba (FRA)	C	–	–
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	IC	4	–
Nate Miller (USA)	–	C	–
Alfred Cole (USA)	–	–	C
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	1	5	4
Torsten May (GER)	2	8	2
Robert Daniels (USA)	3	2	11
David Izeqwire (NIG)	4	–	7
Patrice Aouissi (FRA)	5	9	–
Akim Tafer (FRA)	6	–	–
Terry Dunstan (GB)	7	–	–
Carl Thompson (GB)	8	–	–
Arthur Williams (USA)	9	–	–
Brian Laspada (USA)	10	10	3
Adolpho Washington (USA)	–	1	1
Orlin Norris (USA)	14	3	9
Sergei Kobozev (RUS)	–	6	12
Norbert Ekassi (CAM)	11	7	–
Uriah Grant (USA)	–	–	5
Jacob Mofokeng (SA)	26	–	6
Chris Okoh (GB)	19	–	8
Egerton Marcus (USA)	–	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	C	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	C	–
Henry Maske (GER)	–	–	C
Eddy Smulders (HOLL)	1	2	–
Montell Griffin (USA)	2	7	3
Mike McCallum (USA)	3	–	7
Merqui Sosa (DR)	4	8	5
Jose Gomez (BRA)	5	1	–
Crawford Ashley (GB)	6	–	–
Nicky Piper (GB)	7	–	–
Andrea Magi (ITA)	8	–	–
Maurice Core (GB)	9	–	–
Eric Lucas (CAN)	10	–	–
Duran Williams (USA)	–	3	1
Lou Del Valle (USA)	17	4	8
Ernie Magdaleno (USA)	14	5	9
Michael Nunn (USA)	–	6	–
Ginger Tshabalala (SA)	–	9	–
Drake Thadzi (CAN)	–	10	–
Jeff Harding (AUSTRL)	–	–	2
William Guthrie (USA)	25	–	4
Darrin Allen (USA)	–	–	6
Richard Hall (USA)	–	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Nigel Benn (GB)	C	–	–
Frank Liles (USA)	–	C	–
Roy Jones (USA)	–	–	C
Thulane Malinga (SA)	1	5	3
Henry Wharton (GB)	2	–	–
Luciano Torres (BRA)	3	3	12
Bryant Brannon (USA)	4	6	1
Tim Littles (USA)	5	1	2
Frederic Seiller (FRA)	6	8	–
Michael Nunn (USA)	7	–	–
Mauro Galvano (ITA)	8	–	–
Jean-Claude M'blye (FRA)	9	–	5
Sam Storey (IRE)	10	–	–
Mauricio Amaral (BRA)	–	2	–
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	–	4	–
Henry Wharton (GB)	–	7	8
Tony Byrd (USA)	–	9	7
Cornelius Carr (GB)	–	10	–
Frank Rhodes (USA)	–	–	4
Eric Lucas (CAN)	–	–	6
Glen Johnson (USA)	27	–	9
Reginaldo Andrade (BRA)	–	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Quincy Taylor (USA)	C	–	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Richie Woodhall (GB)	1	6	3
Joe Lipsey (USA)	2	8	1
Agostino Cardamone (ITA)	3	–	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	4	–	–
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	5	–	–
Julian Jackson (USA)	6	–	–
Otis Grant (CAN)	7	–	11
John David Jackson (USA)	8	5	4
Reggie Johnson (USA)	9	3	–
Robert Allen (USA)	10	–	5
Peter Venancio (BRA)	–	1	–
William Joppy (USA)	15	2	2
Shinji Takehara (JAP)	–	4	–
Chongmo Kim (KOR)	–	7	–
Segundo Mercado (ECU)	–	9	6
Zdravo Kostic (SERB)	17	10	–
Lloyd Bryan (USA)	–	–	7
Neville Brown (GB)	14	–	8
Steve Frank (USA)	–	–	9
Juan Viloria (COL)	–	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Terry Norris (USA)	C	–	–
Carl Daniels (USA)	–	C	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	–	–	C
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	1	4	11
Bronco McKart (USA)	2	6	–
Winky Wright (USA)	3	2	–
Troy Waters (AUSTRL)	4	–	–
Ernie Artango (AUSTRL)	5	–	–
Godfrey Nyakana (UGA)	6	9	–
Javier Castillejo (SPA)	7	7	–
Andrew Council (USA)	8	12	6
Raul Marquez (USA)	9	–	2
Luis Santana (DR)	10	–	–
Julio Cesar Vasquez (ARG)	–	1	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	–	3	5
Julio Cesar Green (USA)	–	5	9
Darrin Morris (USA)	–	8	4
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	10	3
Keith Holmes (USA)	11	–	1
Anthony Stephens (USA)	–	–	7
Giovanni Pretorious (SA)	14	–	8
Jose Aguirre (ARG)	–	–	10

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Pernell Whitaker (USA)	C	–	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Wilfredo Rivera (PR)	1	4	1
Oba Carr (USA)	2	1	2
Vincent Phillips (USA)	3	–	–
Derrell Coley (USA)	4	6	10
Gary Jacobs (GB)	5	7	7
Patrick Charpentier (FRA)	6	9	4
Grahame Cheney (AUSTRL)	7	–	–
Lonnie Smith (USA)	8	–	–
Pedro Sanchez (DR)	9	–	–
Crisanto Espana (VEN)	10	3	–
Larry Barnes (USA)	–	2	5
Andrei Pestryaev (RUS)	16	5	–
Andrew Murray (GUY)	14	8	8
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	21	10	–
Maxim Nesterenko (RUS)	30	–	3
Yori Boy Campas (MEX)	–	–	6
Rodney Moore (USA)	–	–	9

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	**C**	–	–
Frankie Randall (USA)	–	**C**	–
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	–	–	**C**
Jan Bergman (SA)	1	6	2
David Kamau (USA)	2	8	8
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	3	1	–
Freddie Pendleton (USA)	4	7	3
Ismael Chaves (ARG)	5	–	12
Charles Murray (USA)	6	11	10
Paul Ryan (GB)	7	–	–
Giovanni Parisi (ITA)	8	–	–
Freddie Ladd (USA)	9	5	4
Soren Sondergaard (DEN)	10	–	–
Juan Coggi (ARG)	–	2	–
Leonardo Mas (PR)	13	3	–
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	4	1
Ross Hale (GB)	17	9	9
Jong Hoon Yuh (KOR)	–	10	–
Pedro Padilla (COL)	–	–	5
Michele Piccirillo (ITA)	22	–	6
Giuseppe Sauli (ITA)	–	–	7

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	**C**	–	–
Orzubek Nazarov (JAP)	–	**C**	–
Phillip Holiday (SA)	–	–	**C**
Jean Baptist Mendy (FRA)	1	10	5
Steve Johnston (USA)	2	5	3
Lamar Murphy (USA)	3	–	7
Shane Mosley (USA)	4	–	–
Angel Mona (FRA)	5	7	–
Ivan Robinson (USA)	6	11	2
Ricardo Silva (ARG)	7	–	–
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	8	–	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	9	3	–
Jeff Fenech (AUSTRL)	10	–	–
Adrianus Taroreh (INDO)	–	1	–
Leavander Johnson (USA)	–	2	–
Joey Gamache (USA)	–	4	–
Billy Schwer (GB)	17	6	6
Dindo Canoy (PHIL)	–	8	–
Antonio Rivera (PR)	–	9	–
John Lark (USA)	–	–	1
Miguel Julio (COL)	–	–	4
Demetrius Ceballos (USA)	–	–	8
Eduardo Molina (COL)	24	–	9
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	27	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Azumah Nelson (GHA)	**C**	–	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	**C**	–
Tracy Patterson (USA)	–	–	**C**
Anatoly Alexandrov (RUS)	1	2	9
Gabriel Ruelas (USA)	2	–	–
Genaro Hernandez (USA)	3	–	–
Djamel Lifa (FRA)	4	5	6
Pedro Gutierrez (ARG)	5	–	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	6	3	8
Floyd Havard (GB)	7	8	–
Boris Sinitsin (RUS)	8	–	4
Rafael Meran (DR)	9	–	–
Justin Juuko (UGA)	10	–	–
Orlando Soto (PAN)	–	1	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	–	4	–
Victor Hugo Paz (ARG)	–	6	–
Jesse James Leija (USA)	–	7	–
Edson Suxa Nacimento (BRA)	–	9	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	10	–
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	–	1
Wilson Rodriguez (DR)	–	–	2
Jaime Rangel (COL)	–	–	3
Jeff Fenech (AUSTRL)	–	–	5
Cliff Samardin (AUSTRL)	18	–	7
James Leija (USA)	–	–	10

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Luisito Espinoza (PHIL)	**C**	**11**	–
Eloy Rojas (VEN)	–	**C**	–
Tom Johnson (USA)	–	–	**C**
Cesar Soto (MEX)	1	–	–
Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)	2	–	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	3	–	–
Carlos Rios (ARG)	4	–	–
Ever Beleno (COL)	5	3	1
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	6	–	3
Kevin Kelley (USA)	7	–	–
Tsuyoshi Harada (JAP)	8	–	–
Yuji Watanabe (JAP)	9	6	–
Billy Hardy (GB)	10	–	5
Miguel Arrozal (PHIL)	16	1	2
Wilfredo Vasquez (PR)	–	2	9
Yung Kyun Park (KOR)	–	4	–
Cesar Soto (PAN)	–	5	–
Jose Badillo (PR)	–	7	11
Mehdi Labdouni (FRA)	17	8	–
Victor Polo (COL)	25	9	6
Jun Gorres (PHIL)	28	10	–
David Santos (USA)	13	–	4
Orlando Soto (PAN)	15	–	7
November Ntshingila (AUSTRL)	–	–	8
Robert Garcia (USA)	–	–	10

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Daniel Zaragoza (MEX)	**C**	–	–
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	**C**	–
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	**C**
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	1	–	–
Erik Morales (MEX)	2	6	–
Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)	3	–	–
Julio Gervacio (DR)	4	–	–
Jesse Benavides (USA)	5	–	–
Yuichi Kasai (JAP)	6	3	7
Vincenzo Belcastro (ITA)	7	8	–
Junior Jones (USA)	8	7	12
Bong Chul Kim (KOR)	9	11	–
Enrique Jupiter (MEX)	10	–	–
Ramon Guzman (VEN)	29	1	–
Yober Ortega (VEN)	–	2	–
Alex Pak (THAI)	–	4	–
Jesus Salud (USA)	–	5	5
Tsuyoshi Harada (JAP)	–	9	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	11	10	–
Pablo Ozuna (COL)	–	–	1
Welcome Ncita (SA)	12	–	2
Anton Gilmore (SA)	13	–	3
Nurhuda (INDO)	–	–	4
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	16	–	6
Daniel Alicer (PR)	–	–	8
Aristead Clayton (USA)	–	–	9
Victor Llerena (COL)	–	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	**C**	–	–
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	–	**C**	–
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	**C**
Khaoyai Mahasarakam (THAI)	1	–	6
Victor Rabanales (MEX)	2	–	–
John Armour (GB)	3	7	2
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	4	–	–
Pastor Maurin (ARG)	5	–	–
Ancee Gedeon (USA)	6	–	1
In Jin Chi (KOR)	7	–	–
Jose Luis Bueno (MEX)	8	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	9	12	5
Somboon Pantasi (THAI)	10	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	1	11
Daorung Chuvatana (THAI)	–	2	–
Yong Hoon Lee (KOR)	–	3	–
Lukhin CP Gym (THAI)	–	4	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	13	5	–
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	–	6	–
Abraham Torres (VEN)	15	8	–
Jorge Eliecer Julio (COL)	19	9	10
Chang Kyun Oh (KOR)	26	10	–
Harold Mestre (COL)	–	–	3
Juvenal Berrio (COL)	–	–	4
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	–	7
Sergio Reyes (USA)	25	–	8
Alex Yaqupoe (RUS)	–	–	9

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Hiroshi Kawashima (JAP)	**C**	–	–
Alimi Goitia (VEN)	–	**C**	–
Carlos Salazar (ARG)	–	–	**C**
Cecilio Espino (MEX)	1	6	6
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	2	4	–
Luis Bolano (COL)	3	–	–
David Griman (VEN)	4	1	–
Satoshi Iida (JAP)	5	2	–
In Joo Cho (KOR)	6	–	–
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	7	3	–
Seung Koo Lee (KOR)	8	8	–
Domingo Sosa (DR)	9	–	–
Angel Rosario (PR)	10	–	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	–	5	–
Hyung Chul Lee (KOR)	–	7	–
Boy Aruan (INDO)	12	9	–
Aquiles Guzman (VEN)	–	10	–
Jaji Sibali (SA)	26	–	1
Ubadel Soto (COL)	–	–	2
Ricky Matulessi (INDO)	–	–	3
Harold Grey (COL)	–	–	4
Jose Diaz (USA)	–	–	5
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	21	–	7
Julio Borboa (MEX)	17	–	8
Orlando Tobon (COL)	–	–	9
Cesar Singo (EQU)	–	–	10

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Yuri Arbachakov (RUS)	**C**	–	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	**C**	–
Danny Romero (USA)	–	–	**C**
Mark Johnson (USA)	1	–	2
Chatchai Elite-Gym (THAI)	2	–	–
Isaias Zamudio (USA)	3	11	–
Chokchai 3-K Battery (THAI)	4	2	–
Daniel Ward (SA)	5	8	–
Enrique Orozco (MEX)	6	3	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	7	–	11
Luigi Camputaro (ITA)	8	–	–
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	9	–	–
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	10	–	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	1	–
Yong Soon Chang (KOR)	–	4	–
Evangelino Perez (PAN)	–	5	5
Sung Tae Lim (KOR)	29	6	–
Hiroki Ioka (JAP)	22	7	–
Luis Benavides (COL)	–	9	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	13	10	–
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	16	–	1
Francisco Tejedor (COL)	–	–	3
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	–	–	4
Abdi Pohan (INDO)	–	–	6
Yodchingchai Sornthong (THAI)	–	–	7
Jose Luis Zepeda (MEX)	–	–	8
Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR)	–	–	9
Arthur Johnson (USA)	–	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	**C**	–	–
Hi Yong Choi (KOR)	–	**C**	–
Vacant	–	–	**C**
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	1	7	2
Chiquita Gonzalez (MEX)	2	–	6
Michael Carbajal (USA)	3	2	3
Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR)	4	8	–
Eric Griffin (USA)	5	9	4
Miguel Angel Granados (MEX)	6	–	–
Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI)	7	6	–
Yamil Caraballo (COL)	8	–	–
Phanieng Sasiprabha-Poontarat (THAI)	9	–	–
Yuichi Hosono (JAP)	10	4	–
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	1	1
Pichitnoi Sithbangprachan (THAI)	–	3	–
Jin Ho Kim (KOR)	–	5	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	10	–
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	–	–	5
Yani Malhendo (INDO)	–	–	7
Shiro Yahiro (JAP)	16	–	8
Onewin Chareon (THAI)	–	–	9
James Wanene (KEN)	–	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	**C**	–	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	**C**	–
Ratanapol Vorapin (THAI)	–	–	**C**
Ala Villamor (PHIL)	1	3	6
Kermin Guardia (COL)	2	2	7
Rocky Lin (JAP)	3	7	9
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	4	5	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	5	11	–
Yodsing Saengmorokot (THAI)	6	–	–
Pichitnoi Sithbangprachan (THAI)	7	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	8	–	2
Manny Melchor (PHIL)	9	–	–
Nungdiew Sakcharporn (THAI)	10	–	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	–	1	–
Kwanjai Battery (THAI)	–	4	–
Osvaldo Guerrero (MEX)	–	6	1
Shinichi Tamaki (JAP)	14	8	3
Nico Thomas (INDO)	24	9	–
Seo Kjin Yang (KOR)	–	10	–
Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)	–	–	4
PS Wonjongkam (THAI)	–	–	5
Rafael Torres (USA)	–	–	8
Jack Russell (AUSTRL)	–	–	10

CLASSIC

From THE RING, May 1965

THE GREATEST FIGHT THAT NEVER TOOK PLACE

Why The Dempsey-Wills Fight Died

By **Charley Rose**

This is the hitherto unpublished story, in every hitherto untold detail, of the greatest fight that never took place. I refer to the match between Jack Dempsey, heavyweight champion of the world, and Harry Wills, at the time his outstanding challenger. The year was 1925.

There had been a previous effort to match Dempsey and Wills. In fact, papers were signed in the offices of the New York Boxing Commission. Jim Farley was for the fight, but Bill Muldoon, aided by Judge George Brower, another member of the Commission, was against it, and they killed it.

Then came the Floyd Fitzsimmons effort to make the fight. In this phase, contracts were signed again. But once more the match fell apart.

The never-fought affair involving Jim Braddock, champion, and Max Schmeling, German challenger, in 1937, most often is referred to as the battle that never was, the Phantom Fight. Braddock snubbed the Uhlan and a contract to meet him and went out to Chicago to fight Joe Louis, who stopped Jim in eight rounds and later knocked out Schmeling in the first heat.

However, I definitely claim for the-fight-that-never-was distinction, number one, the Dempsey-Wills match, which, for one thing, involved Jack at his peak, and for another, involved $1,200,000 in guarantees to the two fighters.

This is the story, up to now secret, of how Tex Rickard steered Dempsey away from Wills, and how Harry, without throwing a glove, picked up $55,000. Harry made real estate investments in New York's Harlem, which kept him for 26 years in his retirement, from 1932 until his death in December 1958, and has been supporting Mrs. Wills in comparative affluence.

This is the inside revelation of how the title chance which Wills coveted went to Gene Tunney who, as you know, got the decision over Jack in Philadelphia on September 23, 1926, and became the world titleholder.

On September 14, 1923, at the Polo Grounds in New York, Dempsey, at the crest of his tenure, knocked out Luis Angel Firpo in the second round.

Dempsey devoted the year 1924 to inactivity. He had six exhibitions with fistic nonentities. There was no public clamor.

Wills had only two fights in 1924. He outpointed Bartley Madden in a 15-rounder and had the better of Firpo in a 12-round, no-decision battle in Jersey City.

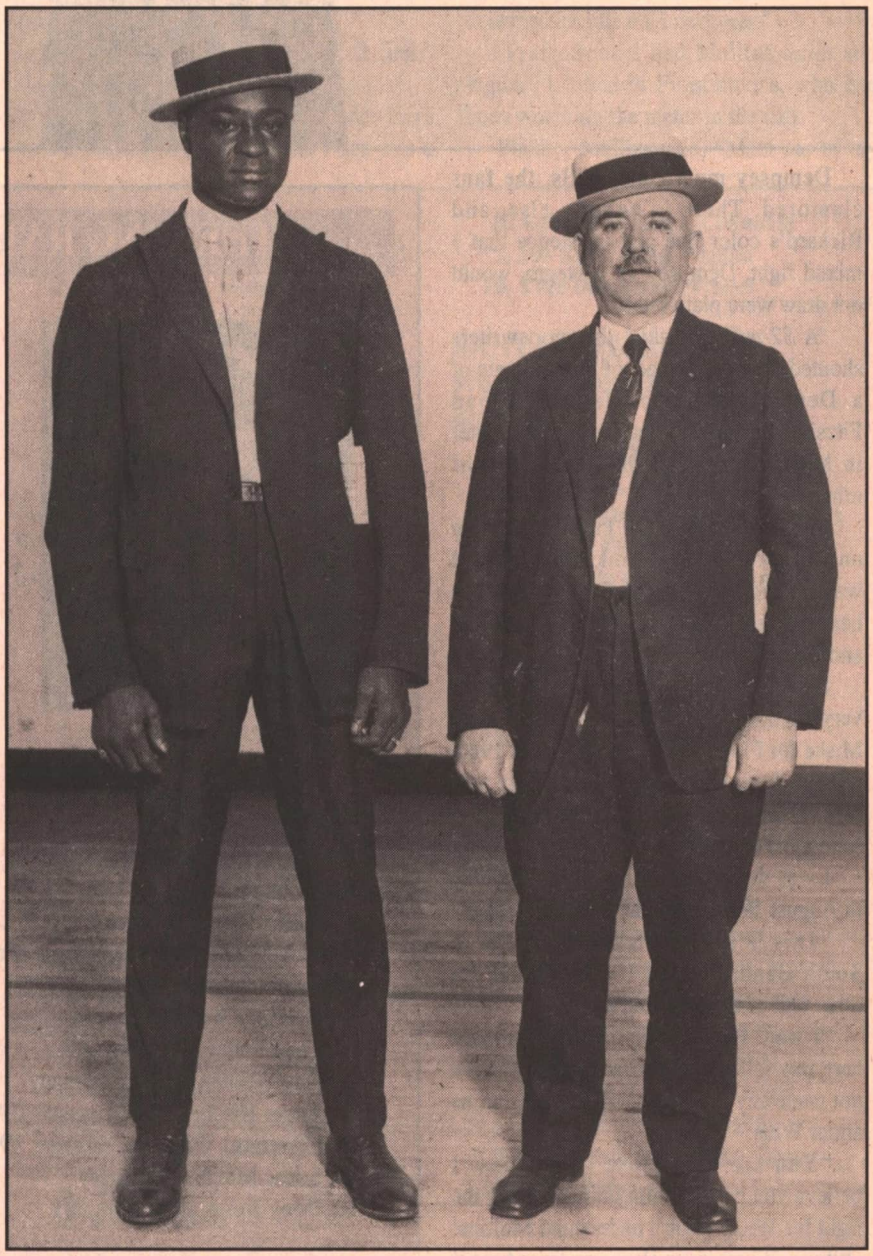
Wills was in a position to challenge Dempsey, who was not averse to busting the so-called color line.

Tunney, former light heavyweight leader, was meeting mostly smaller men than the 220-pound Wills. The Marine had yet to stop Tommy Gibbons, who had gone 15 rounds with Dempsey in 1923, to outscore Harry Greb in 12 in St. Paul, no-decision, and to outpoint Johnny Risko in a dozen heats in Cleveland.

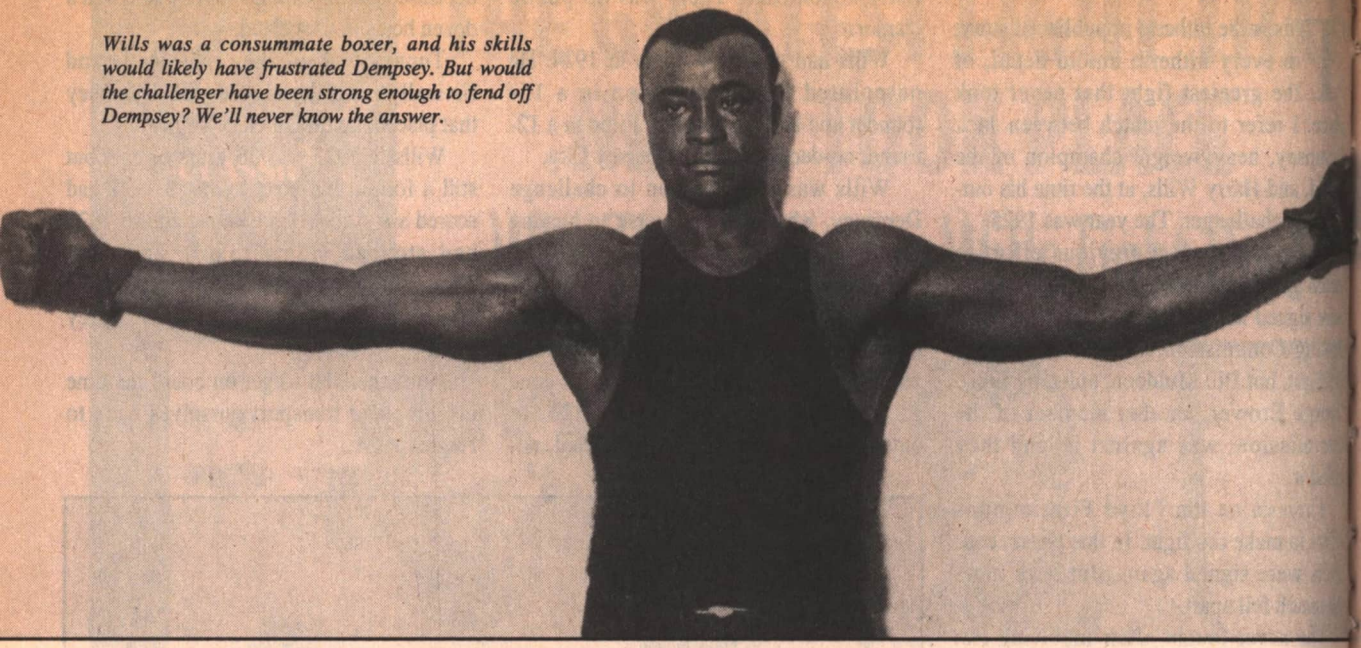
Tunney was growing, physically and fistically, into the match with Dempsey that placed the title in Gene's grasp.

Wills in 1925 was 36 years of age, but still a formidable boxer, who in 1922 had scored six straight knockouts, and in 1923 had stopped Homer Smith and Jack Thompson, turning away more formidable opposition with his eye on the Dempsey match.

Now, then, let us get on board the time machine and transport ourselves back to August 1925.



Wills with manager Paddy Mullins in 1922. Both men desperately wanted a fight with popular heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey to be made, but it was never to be.



Wills was a consummate boxer, and his skills would likely have frustrated Dempsey. But would the challenger have been strong enough to fend off Dempsey? We'll never know the answer.

Dempsey must fight Wills, the fans clamored. There is nobody else, and Rickard's color line and insistence that a mixed fight, Dempsey vs. a Negro, would not draw were plain bunk.

"A $2-million fight," the sportswriters shouted. The full impact of this estimate of a Dempsey-Wills contest hit Floyd Fitzsimmons, a well-known fight promoter in Michigan, and a longtime friend of mine.

I had an office in the Putnam Building on Broadway in New York, from which I was managing Mike McTigue, the light heavyweight champion, Bartley Madden, and five others.

Dempsey and Fitzsimmons were on very friendly terms. Jack had fought Billy Miske for Floyd at Benton Harbor in 1920, with a three-round kayo. Mrs. Fitz and Mrs. Dempsey, Estelle Taylor, had been schoolgirl chums.

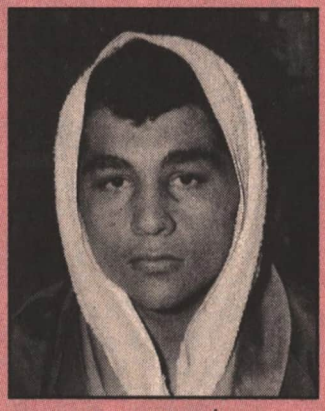
I was dozing off in my office one day in August 1925, when the telephone rang.

"This is Floyd Fitzsimmons, out in South Bend, Indiana," the voice at the other end of the wire told me.

"I want Harry Wills to fight Dempsey here this fall. I can get Jack easily. I have not made any headway with Paddy Mullins about Wills.

"You are very close to Mullins. I believe you can talk him into accepting the fight for Wills. I don't understand Mullins' attitude. Where does Harry go from here if he doesn't take the Dempsey fight? Where

THE RING RATINGS, *May 1965*



Willie Pastrano

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Willie Pastrano, Miami, FL

1. **Gregorio Peralta**, Argentina
2. **Mauro Mina**, Peru
3. **Harold Johnson**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Eddie Cotton**, Seattle, WA
5. **Wayne Thornton**, Fresno, CA
6. **Jose Torres**, New York, NY
7. **Roger Rouse**, San Jose, CA
8. **Bobo Olson**, Honolulu, HI
9. **Gert (Hotty) Van Heerden**, South Africa
10. **Bob Foster**, Washington, D.C.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Cassius Clay, Louisville, KY

1. **Sonny Liston**, Denver, CO
2. **Floyd Patterson**, Great Neck, NY
3. **Ernest Terrell**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **George Chuvalo**, Canada
5. **Zora Folley**, Chandler, AZ
6. **Karl Mildenberger**, Germany
7. **Roger Rischer**, San Francisco, CA
8. **Cleveland Williams**, Houston, TX
9. **Eddie Machen**, Berkeley, CA
10. **Doug Jones**, New York, NY

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joey Giardello, Cherry Hill, NJ

1. **Joey Archer**, New York, NY
2. **Dick Tiger**, Nigeria*
3. **Rubin Carter**, Passaic, NJ
4. **Laszlo Papp**, Hungary
5. **Nino Benvenuti**, Italy
6. **Sandro Mazzinghi**, Italy
7. **Hurricane Kid**, Samoa
8. **Luis Folledo**, Spain
9. **Gomeo Brennan**, The Bahamas
10. **Don Fullmer**, West Jordan, UT

can Wills get anything resembling the juicy proposition I will make him? If Harry really believes he can beat the mauler, here is his opportunity. It is now or never for the 36-year-old Wills.

"I will build an arena seating 40,000 outside South Bend for this fight, which will draw a couple of million dollars. Get busy. Get me Wills and you won't regret it, financially or in any other way.

"I will give you two percent of the gross if you bring me the signatures of Mullins and Wills. There is no time to be lost."

I asked Fitzsimmons who was in the deal with him, and he refused to tell me.

Eventually, I got it out of him that the man immediately behind him was Charley Weissberger, hotel owner in South Bend, and that behind Charley was a secret money man, one of the multimillionaire Studebaker family, for a century builders of carriages and wagons, later to go into the automobile business in South Bend. I told Fitz to rush to New York.

The next day was a Sunday. We took a cab from my suite in the Astor to the Mullins home at 218 Ocean Parkway, in Brooklyn. Paddy just was getting up for the nine o'clock mass. He hauled himself and his red flannel drawers out of bed and exclaimed, "Charley, what are you after at this time of day, on Sunday?"

I explained my mission. When I mentioned the name of Fitzsimmons, Paddy went into a series of fits, punctuated with four-letter words even Brooklyn never heard before.

"I will see Fitzsimmons in Hell first," the explosive Mullins shouted.

I soft-talked him, little by little. Here was a chance to grab the title. Here was a chance to earn $200,000. Here was the greatest opportunity boxing had presented in years. Why spite your money chances for the sake of carrying on a stupid vendetta with Floyd?

I talked for an hour. Paddy took off the red drawers. He got into his go-to-mass clothes. He also got into his church mood. He toned down his lingo, and sat down to serious talk.

"A lot of phonies have been after me," Paddy said. "I know you really mean business. But how do I know you can get Dempsey? How do I know you can wean him away from Rickard? How do I know he wants to fight this year? They tell me he doesn't plan to defend his title until next year."

Pretty soon I had Mullins quiet and logical. I called in Fitzsimmons, who had been watching the meter in the cab.

Finally, Mullins said, "Meet me in my

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Emile Griffith, Weehawken, NJ

1. **Luis Rodriguez**, Miami, FL
2. **Manuel Gonzalez**, Odessa, TX
3. **Jose Stable**, New York, NY
4. **Brian Curvis**, Wales
5. **William Ludick**, South Africa
6. **Fortunato Manca**, Italy
7. **Billy Collins**, Nashville, TN
8. **Gabriel Terronez**, Fresno, CA
9. **Gaspar Ortega**, Mexico
10. **Stan Hayward**, Philadelphia, PA

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos Hernandez, Venezuela

1. **Eddie Perkins**, Chicago, IL
2. **Jose Napoles**, Mexico
3. **Pierro Brandi**, Italy
4. **Sandro Lopopolo**, Italy
5. **Tito Marshall**, Panama
6. **Louis Molina**, San Jose, CA
7. **Johnny De Pieza**, Trinidad
8. **Olli Maki**, Finland
9. **Doug Vaillant**, Cuba
10. **Adolph Pruitt**, St. Louis, MO

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos Ortiz, New York, NY

1. **Bunny Grant**, Jamaica
2. **Angel Robinson Garcia**, France
3. **Nicolino Locche**, Argentina
4. **Paul Armstead**, Los Angeles, CA
5. **Kenny Lane**, Muskegon, MI
6. **Ismael Laguna**, Panama
7. **Alfredo Urbina**, Mexico
8. **Frankie Narvaez**, New York, NY
9. **Franco Brondi**, Italy
10. **Conny Rudhof**, Germany

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Gabriel (Flash) Elorde, Philippines

1. **Johnny Bizzarro**, Erie, PA
2. **Willi Quatuor**, Germany
3. **Love Allotey**, Ghana
4. **Teruo Kosaka**, Japan
5. **Kang Suh Il**, South Korea
6. **Jose Luis Cruz**, Mexico
7. **Ray Adigun**, Nigeria
8. **Vincente Derado**, Argentina
9. **Danny Valdez**, Los Angeles, CA
10. **Levi Madi**, South Africa

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vicente Saldivar, Mexico

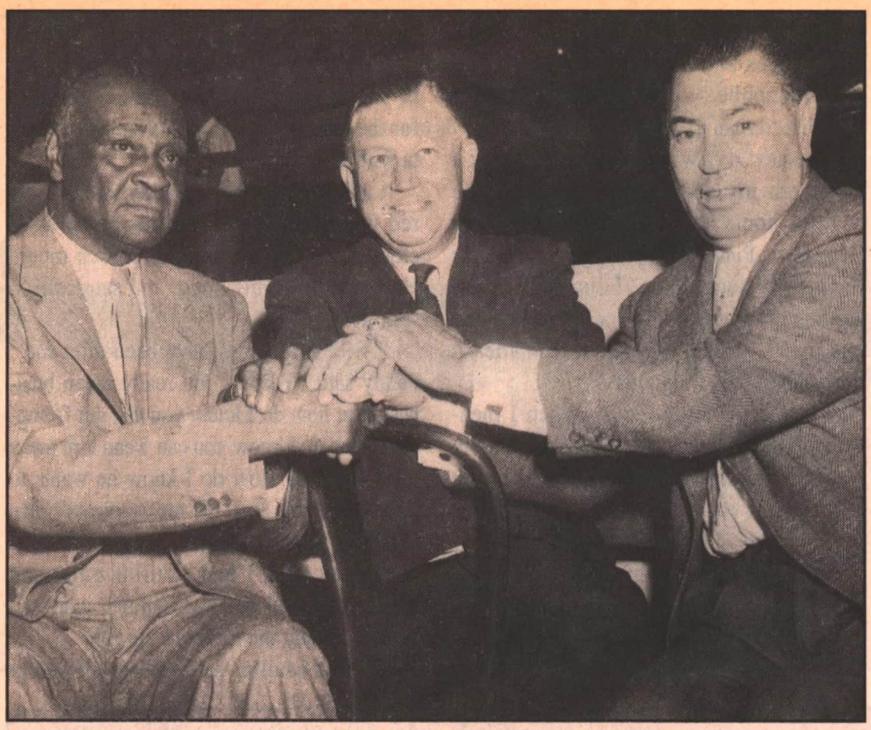
1. **Floyd Robertson**, Ghana
2. **Misunori Seki**, Japan
3. **Howard Winstone**, Wales
4. **Raul Rojas**, San Pedro, CA
5. **Carlos Canete**, Argentina
6. **Jaime Valladares**, Ecuador
7. **Don Johnson**, Los Angeles, CA
8. **Antonio Herrera**, Colombia
9. **Joe Rafiu King**, Nigeria
10. **Yves Desmarets**, France

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eder Jofre, Brazil

1. **Fighting Harada**, Japan
2. **Joe Medel**, Mexico
3. **Jesus Pimental**, Los Angeles, CA
4. **Manuel Barrios**, Mexico
5. **Bernardo Caraballo**, Colombia
6. **Mimun Ben Ali**, Spain
7. **Felix Brami**, Tunisia
8. **Risto Luukkonen**, Finland
9. **Ronnie Jones**, Chicago, IL
10. **Ray Asis**, Stockton, CA

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Pone Kingpetch, Thailand

1. **Salvatore Burruni**, Italy
2. **Hiroyuki Ebihara**, Japan
3. **Alacran (Efren) Torres**, Mexico
4. **Horacio Accavallo**, Argentina
5. **Rocky Gattelari**, Australia
6. **Takeshi Nakamura**, Japan
7. **Walter McGowan**, Scotland
8. **Raton Mojica**, Nicaragua
9. **Katsuyoshi Takayama**, Japan
10. **Bob Allotey**, Ghana



Wills and Dempsey pose with New York State Athletic Commission Chairman Bob Christenberry in 1954, almost 30 years after they were considered the two best heavyweights in the world.

office tomorrow morning. I will have Wills there, ready to talk turkey. Now, you, Fitzsimmons, no shenanigans. I will get you Wills. You get Dempsey.

"We get $200,000 after the fight. If the fight does not take place, we collect $50,000 as a forfeit, plus $5,000 for training expenses. We will set a limit date for the fight."

"If you want to gamble on the house, I will give you 20 percent of the gross," Fitzsimmons said.

Floyd and I met Wills and Mullins the following morning. We held several conferences later. We were all set.

Now to get Jack Dempsey, heavyweight champion of the world. I visited him at the Ambassador Hotel in New York. Estelle Taylor also was in the room. All through my hour's talk with Jack, she kept knitting, never saying a word.

"Charley, tell Fitz and Mullins that the match is set for South Bend," Dempsey said. "I will fight Wills."

I told Dempsey that Wills, a consummate boxer, would give him a tough fight. I advised Jack to have a talk with Bartley Madden.

"Get this," said Dempsey. "My share is $1-million. Understood?"

I assured Jack that he would be paid a cool million after the fight, maybe a lot of it before the contest.

He agreed with me that it would be wise for him to see Madden, who had gone 15 rounds with Wills at Queensborough Stadium in New York.

Madden and I went to the Ambassador the following afternoon. Bartley assured Dempsey that he would have no serious trouble with the 36-year-old Wills.

"What do you think?" Jack asked me.

"Jack, you can stop Wills inside eight rounds," I told the champion. Madden gave him a very rough battle for 10 rounds. But Madden is not Dempsey.

"Wills is crafty. Big, strong, clean-living. A great boxer. You would be risking your title, definitely. I would not urge you to rely too much on what Harry did against Madden as a lone of what Wills would be like with a shot at the championship.

"However, you fight like you can and you will keep the title, and get a million out of the fight."

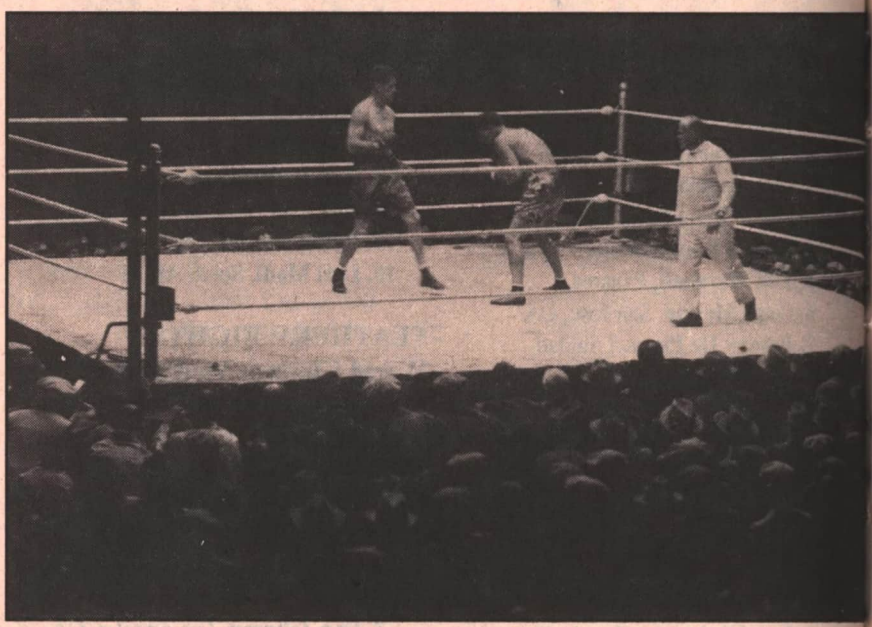
The following afternoon, Fitz left for Los Angeles. He dropped off a telegram to me from Needles, which I still have, to meet Dempsey and him at the Barbara Hotel in Los Angeles, which I believe Jack owned.

We had a talk out there and everything was rosy. Dempsey and I returned to New York.

A week later I learned that Dempsey and Estelle were in the Belasco Theater seeing Kiki. I walked in on them, and again the champion assured me the Wills fight was on.

Funny thing: I had a feeling that it wasn't on. I had a picture of Rickard working behind the scenes, and it made me uneasy.

At this time I began to think about myself. Here I was setting up a $2-million enterprise, and I had nothing on paper by which I would be able to collect, fight or no fight.



The fight "The Manassa Mauler" took instead of Wills: Heavyweight champion Dempsey defends against Gene Tunney. Tunney won on points, ending all talk of a Dempsey-Wills showdown.

Fitz gave me a contract for two percent and handed me a check for $2,000 to cover current expenses.

Some days thereafter, I got a telephone summons from Rickard to come right over to the Garden.

"Charley, you have Wills. But I have Dempsey," Tex said. "I will not let Jack fight Wills unless Fitz cuts me in as a 50-50 partner.

"Charley, you and I have been friends for some time. I bought Mike McTigue's contract for you for $3,500. I rely on you to make Fitzsimmons see the light, or there will be no heavyweight title fight this year with anybody."

I liked the idea of Rickard being in the deal. Tex was the world's greatest promoter. He would give the match solidity.

I called Floyd at Michigan City and gave him the lowdown. I told him Rickard liked the terms. I had not told Tex about Wills' $55,000, fight or no fight.

Rickard was listening in on another wire. Fitz let loose with the worst collection of four-letter words anybody could put together. He insulted Rickard, Tex's father and mother, and his family line going back 100 years.

After calling Rickard a few more names, Floyd hung up. No dice. No Rickard as a partner.

Rickard smiled, the way he had a habit of smiling. "Charley," he said, "your pal is a dirty so and so. But keep on telling him. I have Dempsey signed up."

Well, that was it. No fight!

I took time off to do a little business for myself. I sent Madden out to Minneapolis to fight Tunney on September 25, 1925. Gene stopped Bartley in three rounds.

I wired Fitzsimmons, who was at the Morrison in Chicago. I made another desperate effort. But nothing doing.

Convinced there would be no fight, I reminded Floyd that he owed Wills $55,000. Floyd did not renege. He made out a check, not to Paddy Mullins, but to Wills.

Where did I stand? I went to the Wills apartment at 32 St. Nicholas Place in New York and had a fine talk with Harry and Mrs. Wills. They were profuse in their thanks to me. "We want to take care of you." How many times had I heard this in my long connection with boxing?

They gave me $2,000. Mullins said, "Little enough, and it's all yours. I will recoup by matching Wills with Jack Sharkey."

That fight did come off, in 1926. Harry lost on a foul in the 13th.

Funny how things sometimes turn out. Wills lost his contender rating in 1927, when he was kayoed by Paulino Uzcudun, and in 1929, Charley Rose became Wills' manager. Mullins had died.

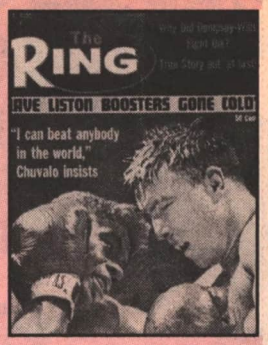
Dempsey did not fight in 1925. He did fight Tunney in 1926, with sad results for the mauler.

And that ends the story of the greatest fight that never took place.

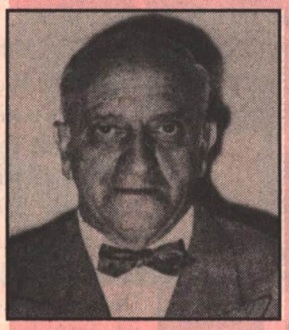
Rickard announced that he would not promote a Dempsey-Wills fight because it could not draw. He really was not convinced of the truth of this explanation. But it was pap for the public. ■

Charley Rose is a veteran boxer, manager, promoter, and soldier.

THE RING, May 1965

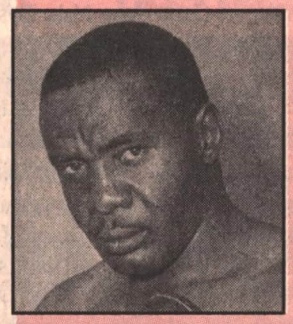


The Cover: "I can beat anybody in the world," says heavyweight contender George Chuvalo, a disputed loser on points to former champion Floyd Patterson at Madison Square Garden. It appears that while the rugged Chuvalo can be outboxed, no one wants to fight him for a second time.

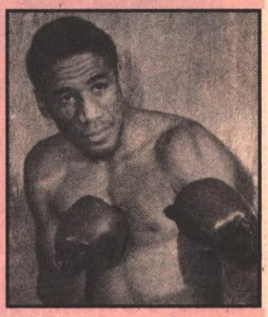


A New Home: For the first time in nearly 40 years, THE RING is operating without a Madison Square Garden address. Expansion (hall of fame, museum, book shop) necessitated roomier facilities, and Publisher Nat Fleischer (pictured) has moved "The Bible Of Boxing" to West 31st Street in New York City.

The Rock In Retirement: Rocky Marciano shares the story of his decision to retire, which he made 10 years ago. Among the deciding factors: "In 1955, [Floyd] Patterson was 20 years old and was fighting only eight rounds. I would have had to wait a year for him, and the life had started to bore me."



The Clay-Liston Rematch: Sonny Liston sounds ready for his return with heavyweight champion Cassius Clay (a.k.a. Muhammad Ali), scheduled for May 25 in Boston. While Liston isn't talking to the press, he told a close friend he plans to "tear that kid apart."



Fighter Of The Month: Top-rated welterweight Luis Rodriguez is this month's winner based on his victory over middleweight contender Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. Also receiving consideration: heavyweight Ernie Terrell, who won the vacant WBA title by kayoing Eddie Machen.

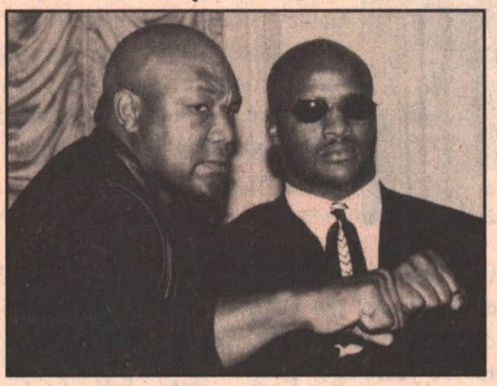
LOOKING AHEAD

By Steve Farhood

DOES HE REALLY MEAN GOODBYE?

On February 29, George Foreman was to end his career where he had started it 27 years ago—at Madison Square Garden. In what he promised would be the last fight of his remarkable career, Big George was to be rematched with Michael Moorer, whom Foreman kayoed to win the WBA and IBF heavyweight titles in 1994. But as we went to press, the February date was out. April has been mentioned as an alternative.

The fight was to be part of the Garden's 25th anniversary celebration of the greatest night in the Big Building's history, March 8, 1971, when Joe Frazier defeated Muhammad Ali in The Fight of the Century. But when rumors leaked that Foreman was still considering a bout with Mike Tyson, TVKO, which was to air the bout on PPV, balked. The network didn't want to pay for Big George's *second-to-last* fight.



Foreman and Moorer before their first fight

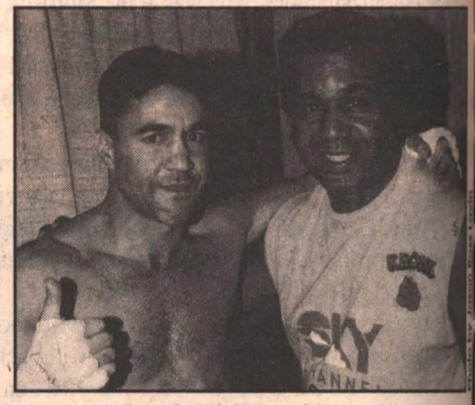
Financial problems subsequently developed between TVKO and promoter Bob Arum, leaving Moorer in a difficult position. Foreman is contractually obligated to fight the southpaw, but Moorer has been guaranteed a shot at IBF champion Frans Botha by June 9. Still, Foreman is his fighter of choice. "What happened in the first fight was a fluke," John Davimos, Moorer's manager, said of Foreman's one-punch knockout. "Michael's had the title, but he hasn't beaten George."

Moorer was to earn $3-million. In order to close the deal, he had to fork over $300,000 to Foreman, who refused to fight for less than $10-million.

"George has done everything humanly possible to get out of this fight," said Davimos. "But we have a valid contract for a rematch, so it's either fight Michael Moorer or retire and nobody cares."

LISTEN UP

How's this for a weird matchup: **Bobby Czyz** vs. **James Toney**? As we went to press, Top Rank matchmaker **Ron Katz** said it was likely to be made ... Another talked-about matchup between former world champions: **John-John Molina** vs. **Rafael Ruelas** ... From the We-Could-Never-Make-This-Up Department: A scheduled four-rounder for sometime in the future: **Butterbean** vs. **Mark Gastineau**. Not only will **Joe Louis** be turning over in his grave, but so, too, will all the members of the Bum-Of-The-Month Club ... Manager **John Johnson** turned down **Tim Witherspoon** as an opponent for **Alexandr Zolkin** because he's waiting for a try at **Riddick Bowe** ... Everybody wants to fight comebacking junior lightweight **Jeff Fenech**. What the Australian triple-crown champion wants is a third fight with WBC 130-pound titlist **Azumah Nelson** in Melbourne.



Fenech with Emanuel Steward

Las Vegas Hilton

FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
James Toney	Bobby Czyz	2-1	Both are dreaming if they think they can compete as heavys
Arturo Gatti	Jeff Fenech	7-2	Gatti for real; Fenech unknown quantity at this time
Azumah Nelson	Jeff Fenech	7-2	Fenech has a lot to prove before considering Nelson
Terry Norris	Julio Cesar Vasquez	6-1	Norris has regained both confidence and form
Wayne McCullough	Daniel Zaragoza	3-1	Can Zaragoza pull off yet another upset?

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